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Muchin et al.

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(54) **CONTAINER LOADER LEDGE**

(76) Inventors: **Jay Z. Muchin**, 712 N. 11th St., Manitowoc, WI (US) 54220; **David J. Merten**, 4019 Goodwin Rd., Manitowoc, WI (US) 54220

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **141/2**; 141/363; 141/364; 141/365; 141/366; 141/375
(58) **Field of Search** ..... 141/2, 363, 364, 141/365, 366, 375, 311 R, 319, 391; 68/17 R

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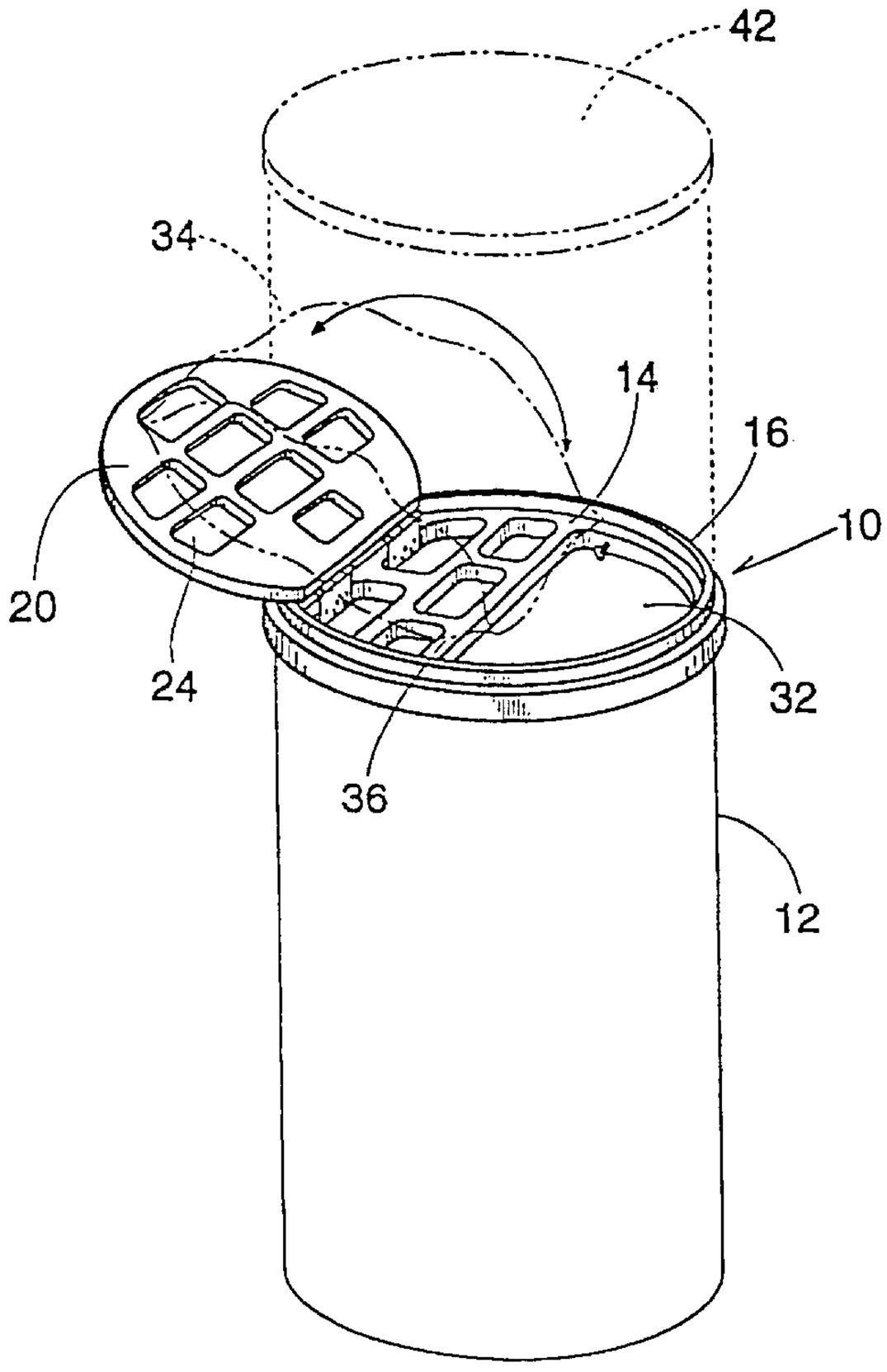
Primary Examiner—Timothy L. Maust
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Ryan Kromholz & Manion, S.C.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A fitment adapted to cover and reinforce an exposed edge of a container and facilitate the loading of the container with material. Alternatively, the fitment may be integrally formed with the container to be filled. The fitment includes a generally planar surface having a peripheral edge and an apertured cover hingedly attached thereto. A loading ledge, able to support heavy material to be loaded, is provided when the apertured cover is in the open position. The peripheral edge further includes a ramped portion to support the opened cover and heavy material. Apertures in the fitment allow passage of material from the ledge into the container.

19 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets



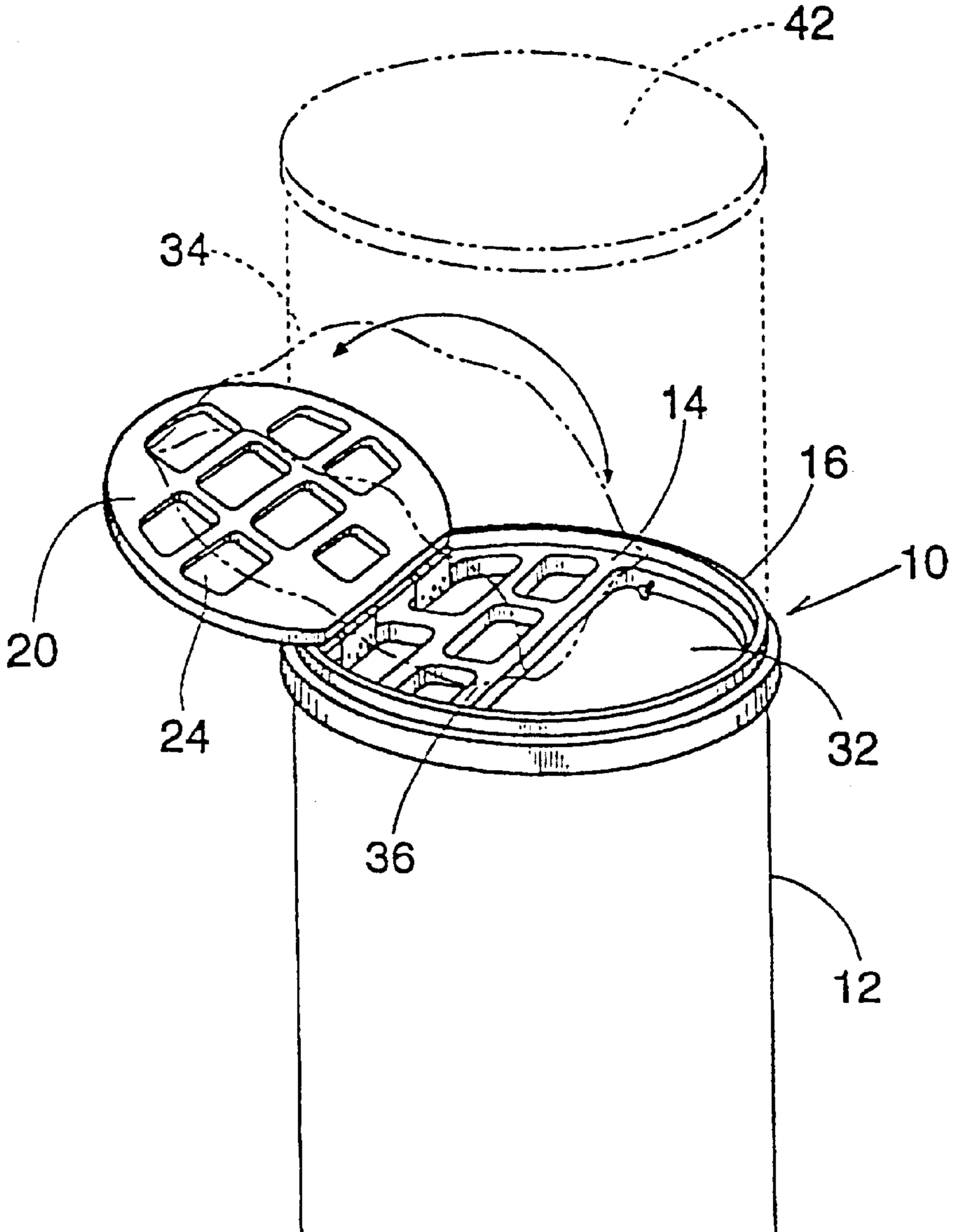


Fig. 1a

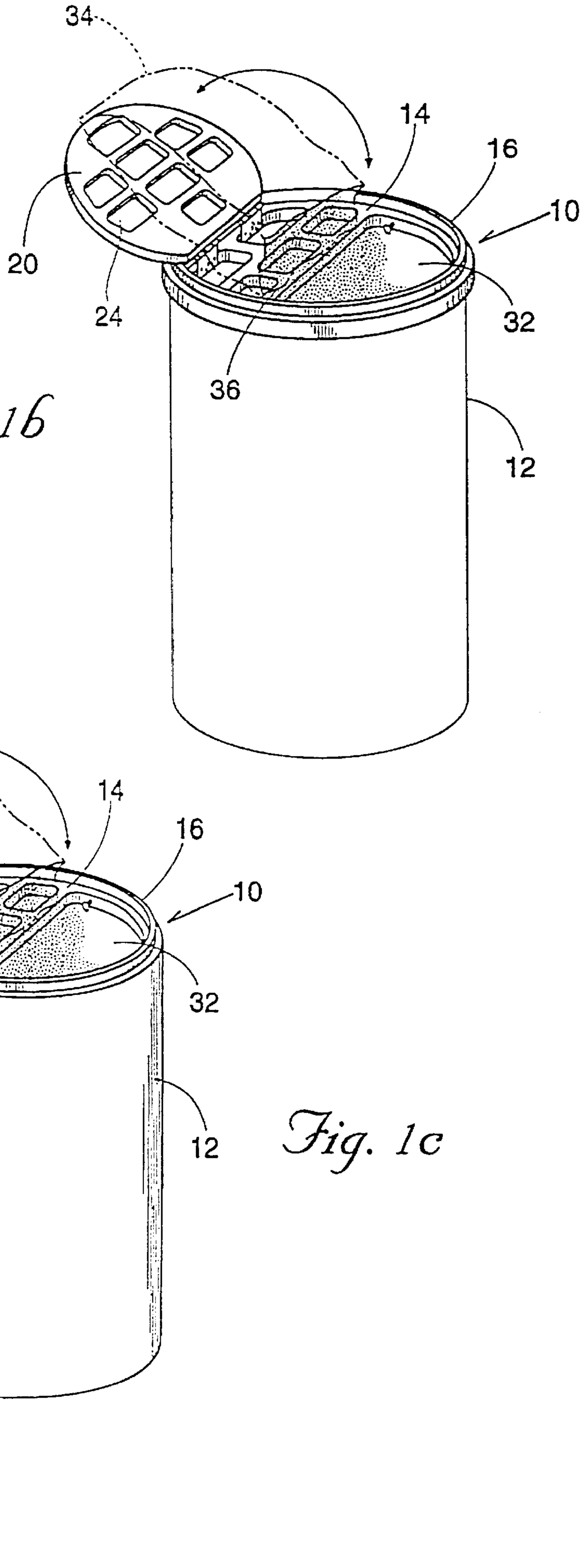


Fig. 1b

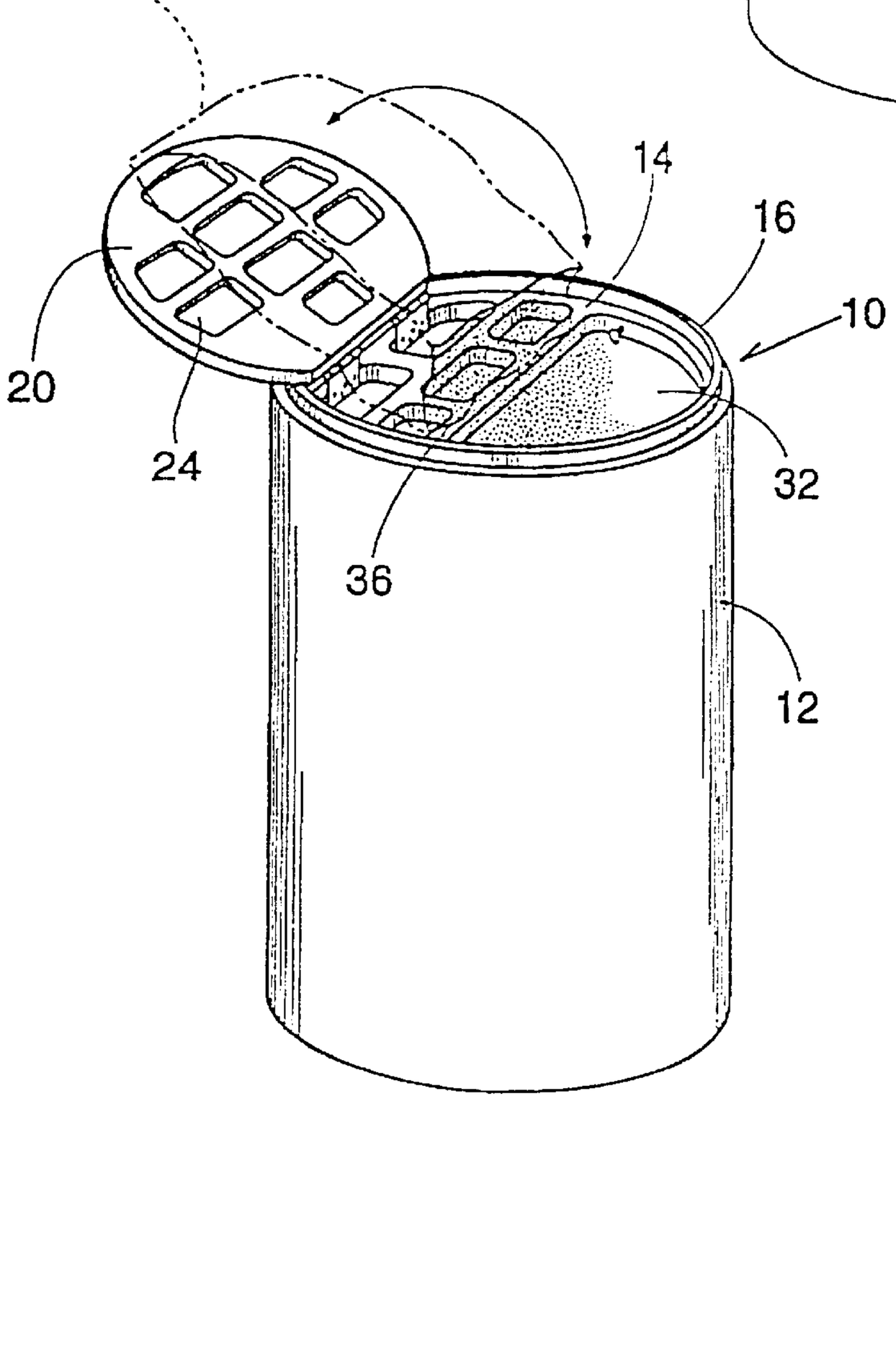


Fig. 1c

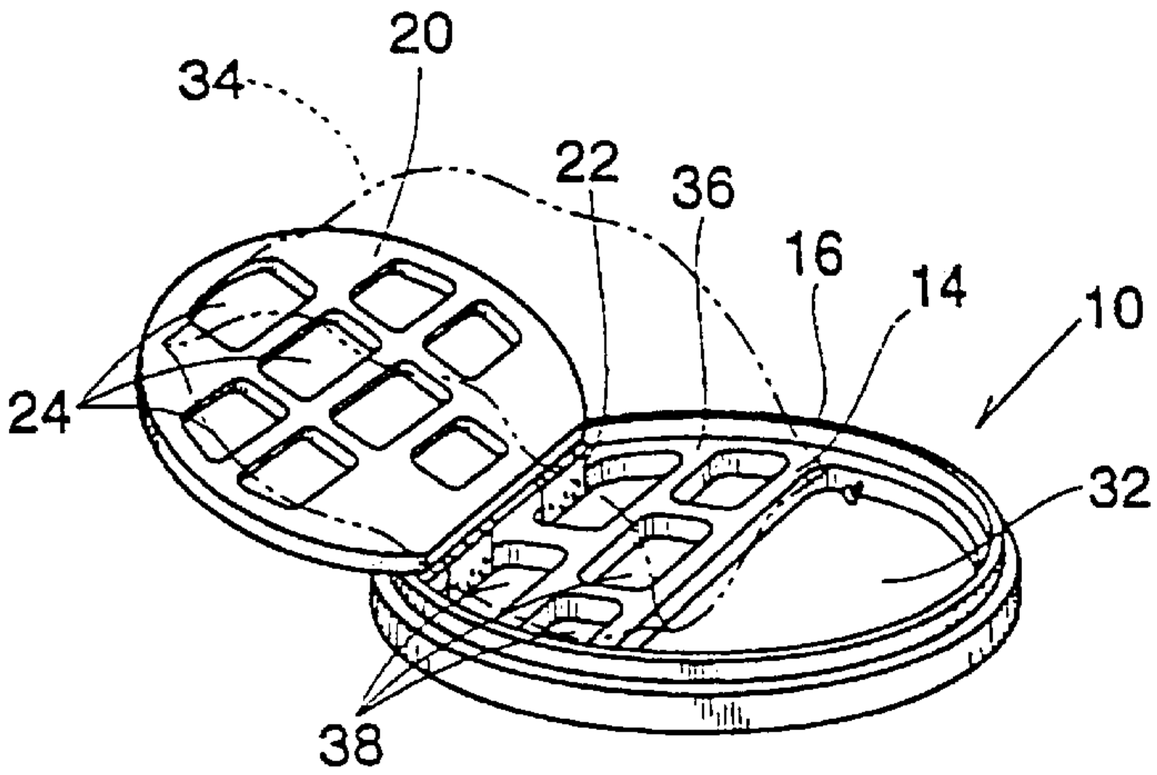


Fig. 2a

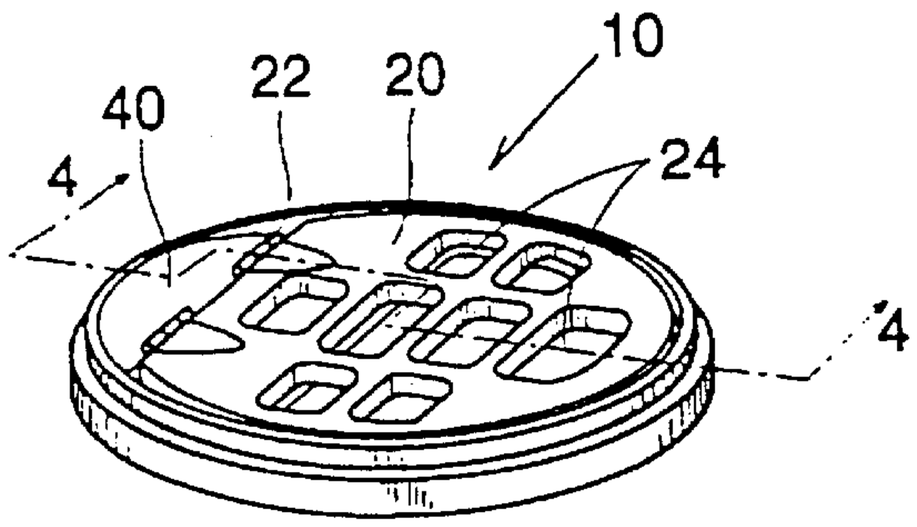
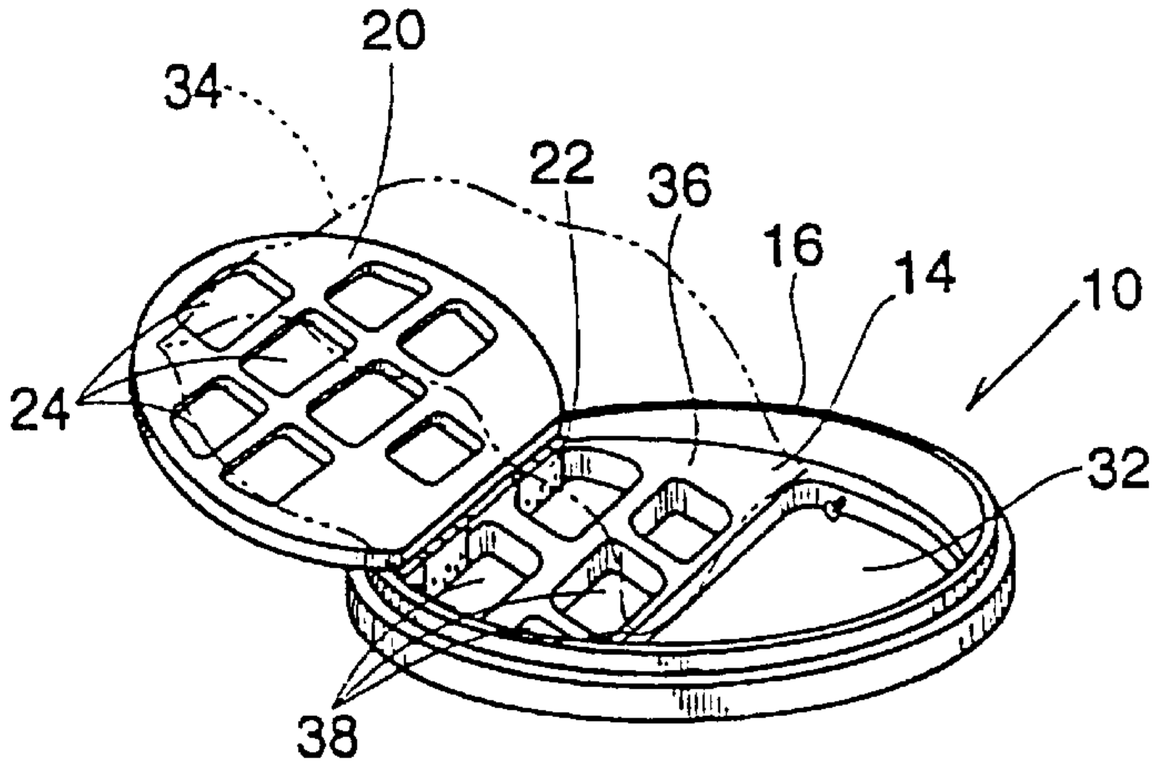


Fig. 2b



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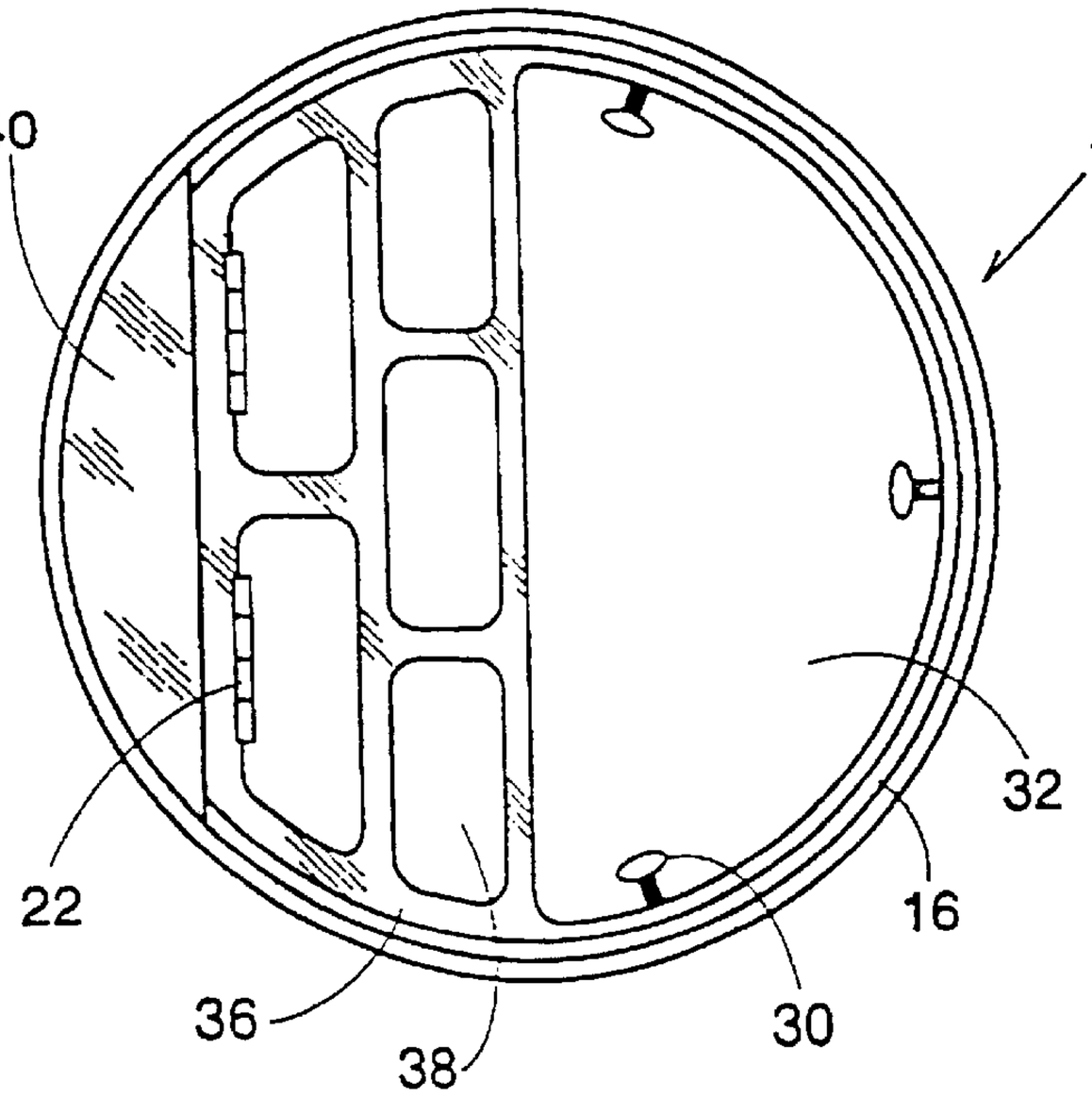


Fig. 3

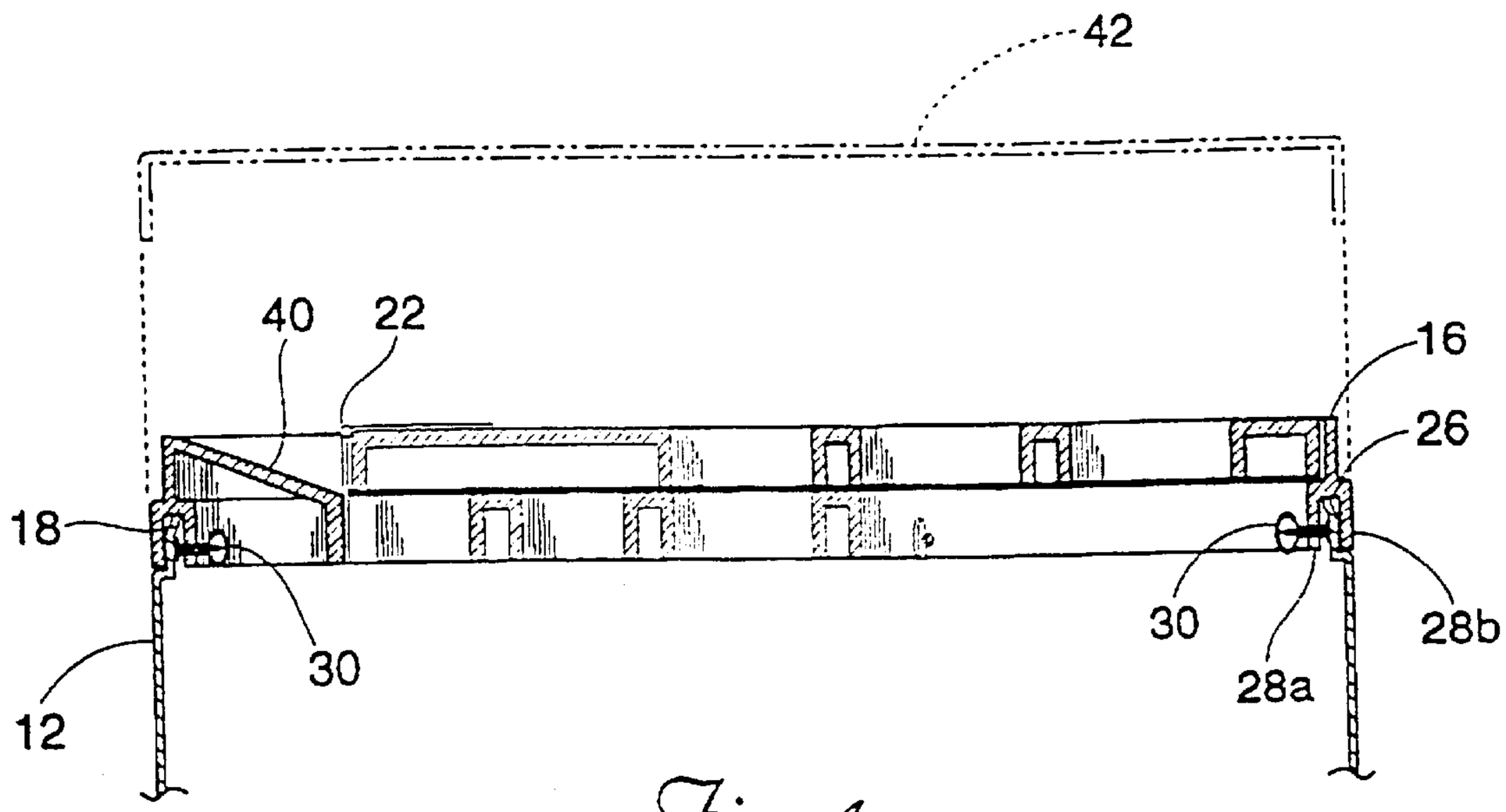


Fig. 4

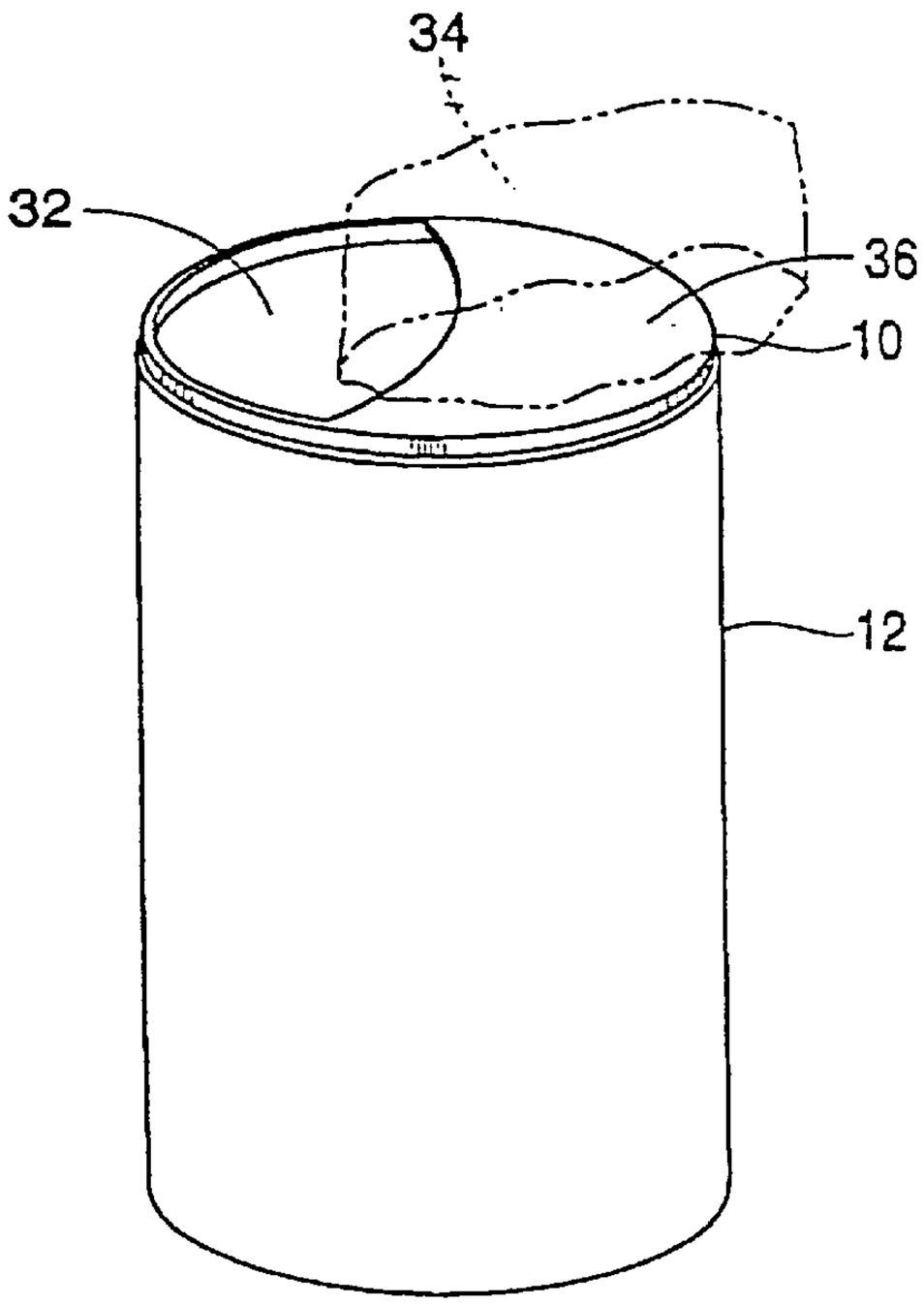


Fig. 5a

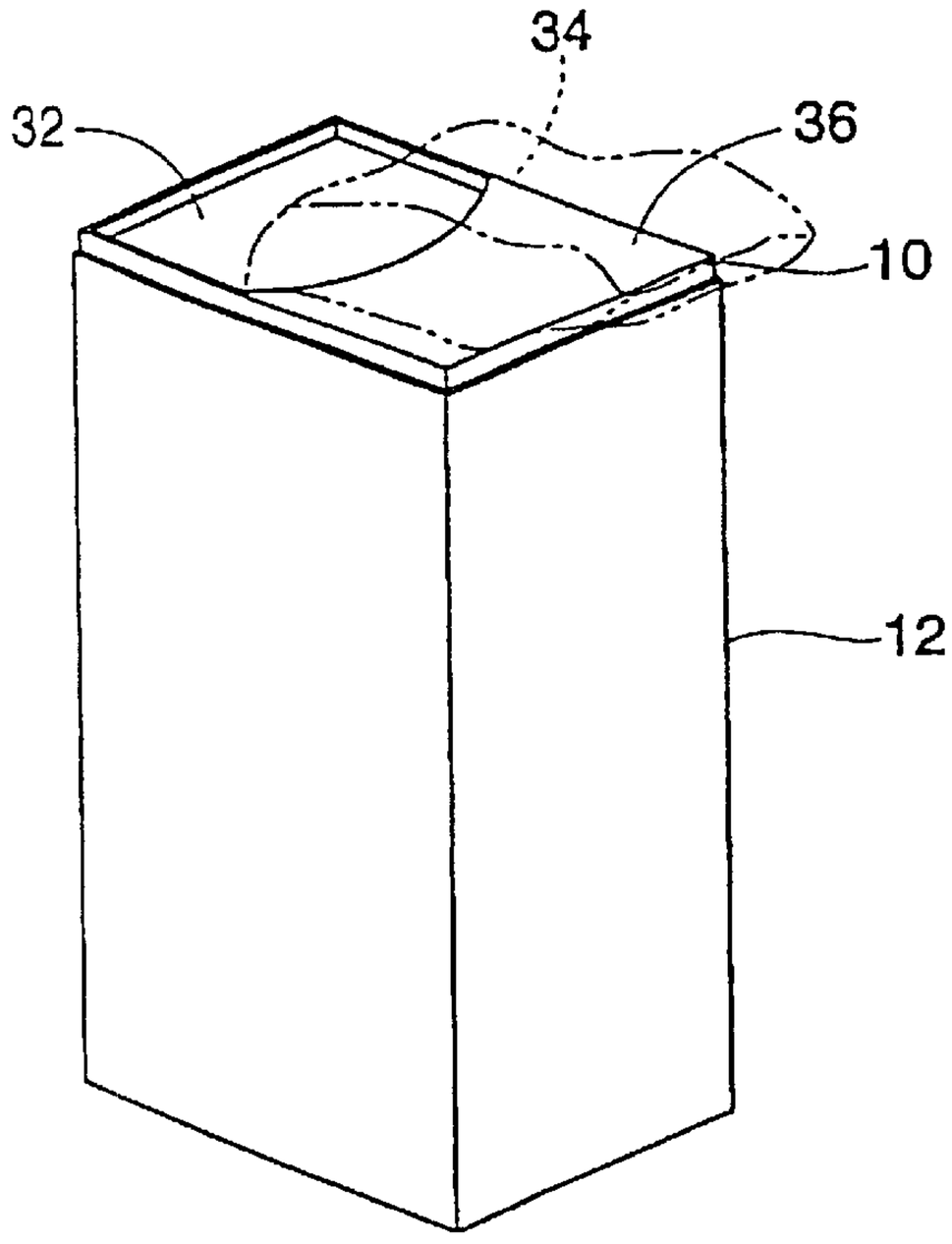


Fig. 5b

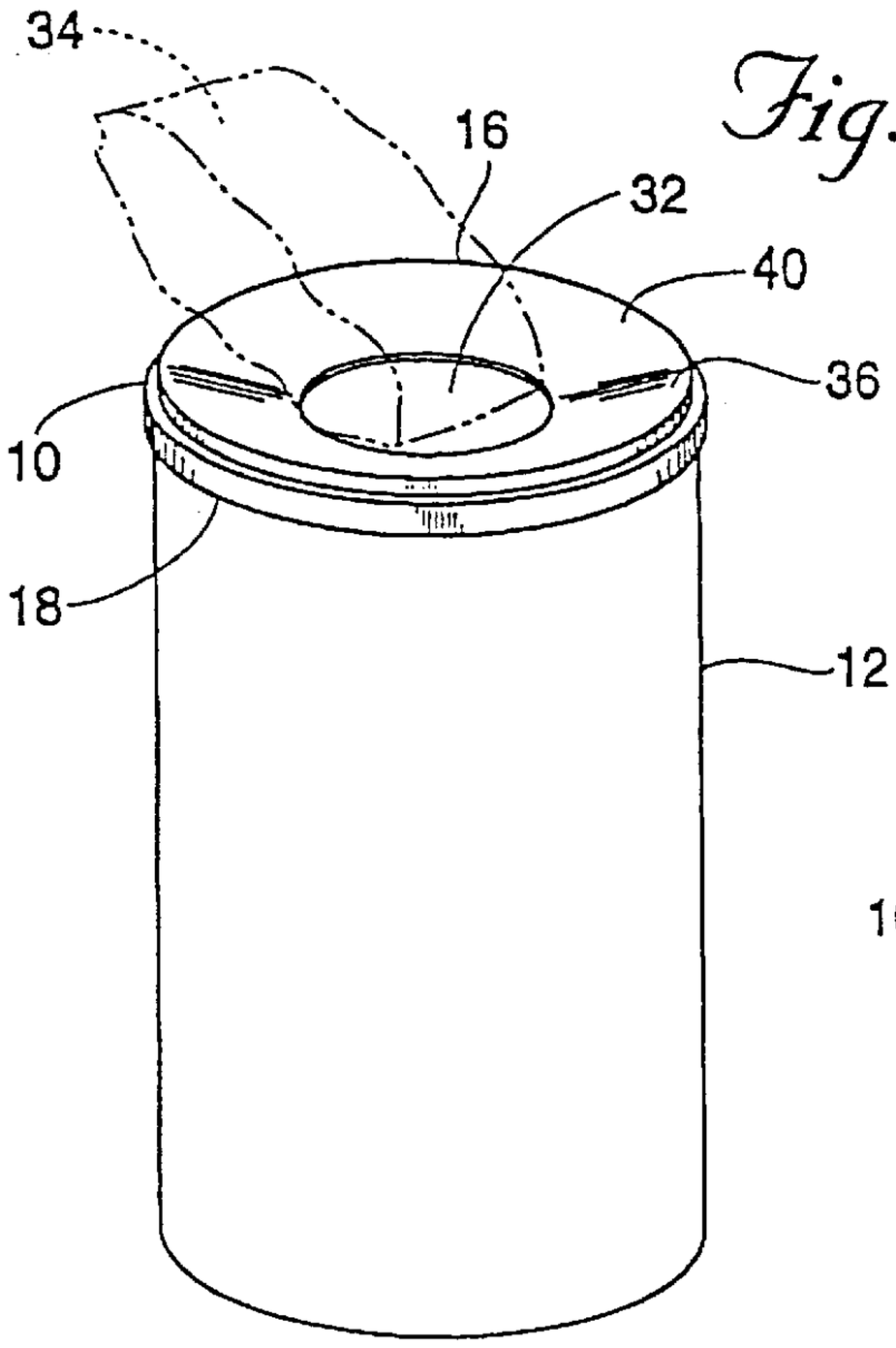


Fig. 6a

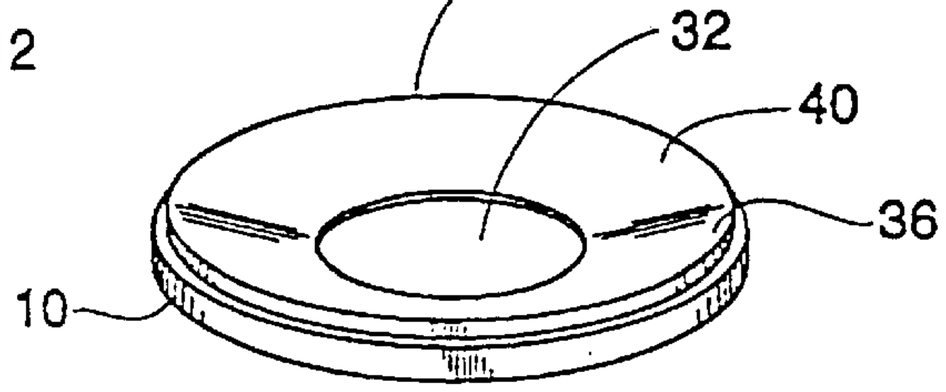


Fig. 6b

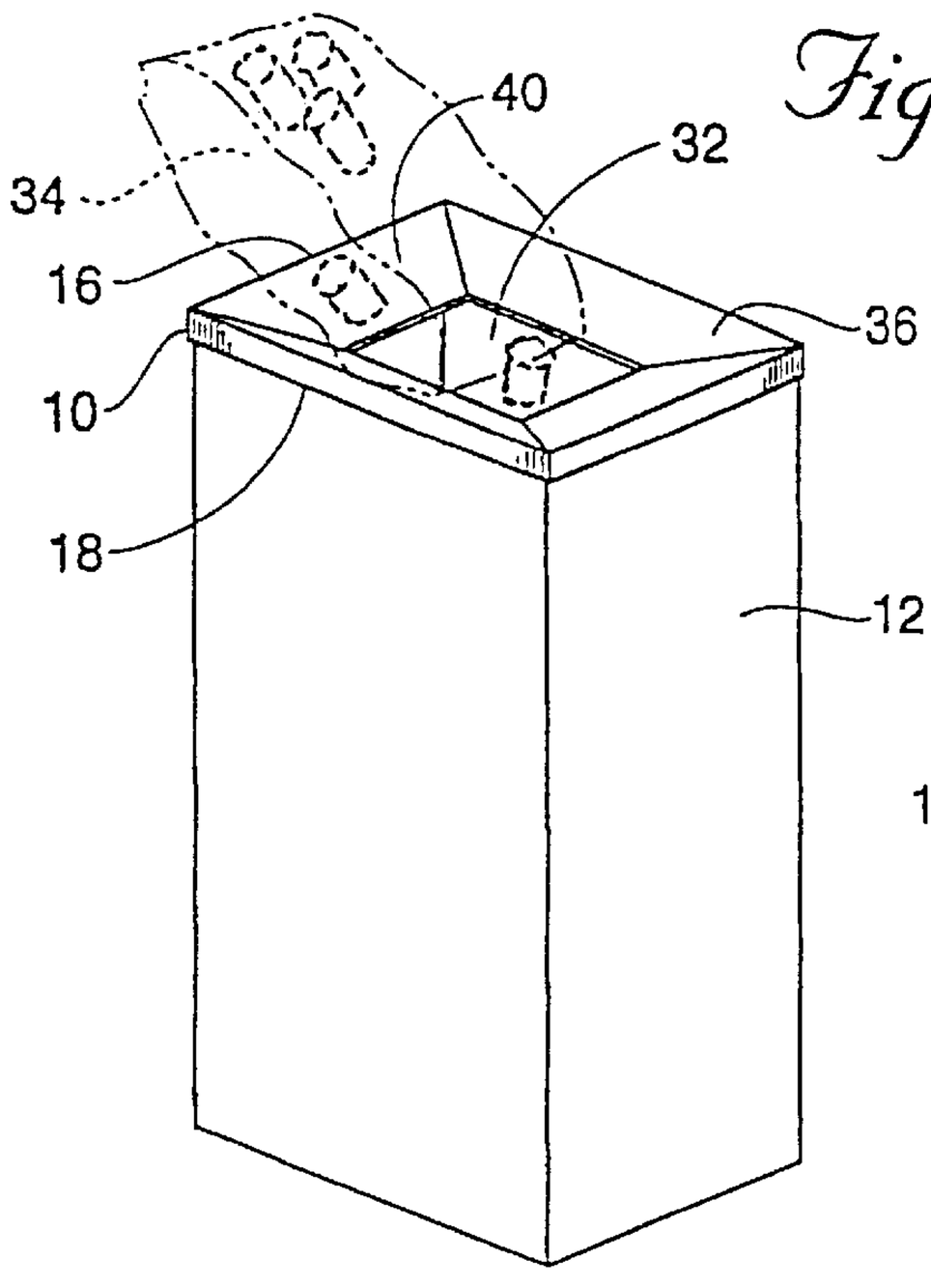


Fig. 6c

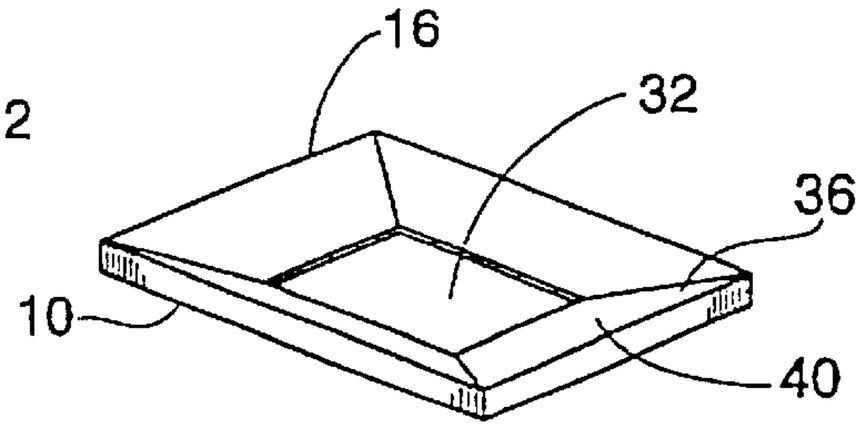


Fig. 6d

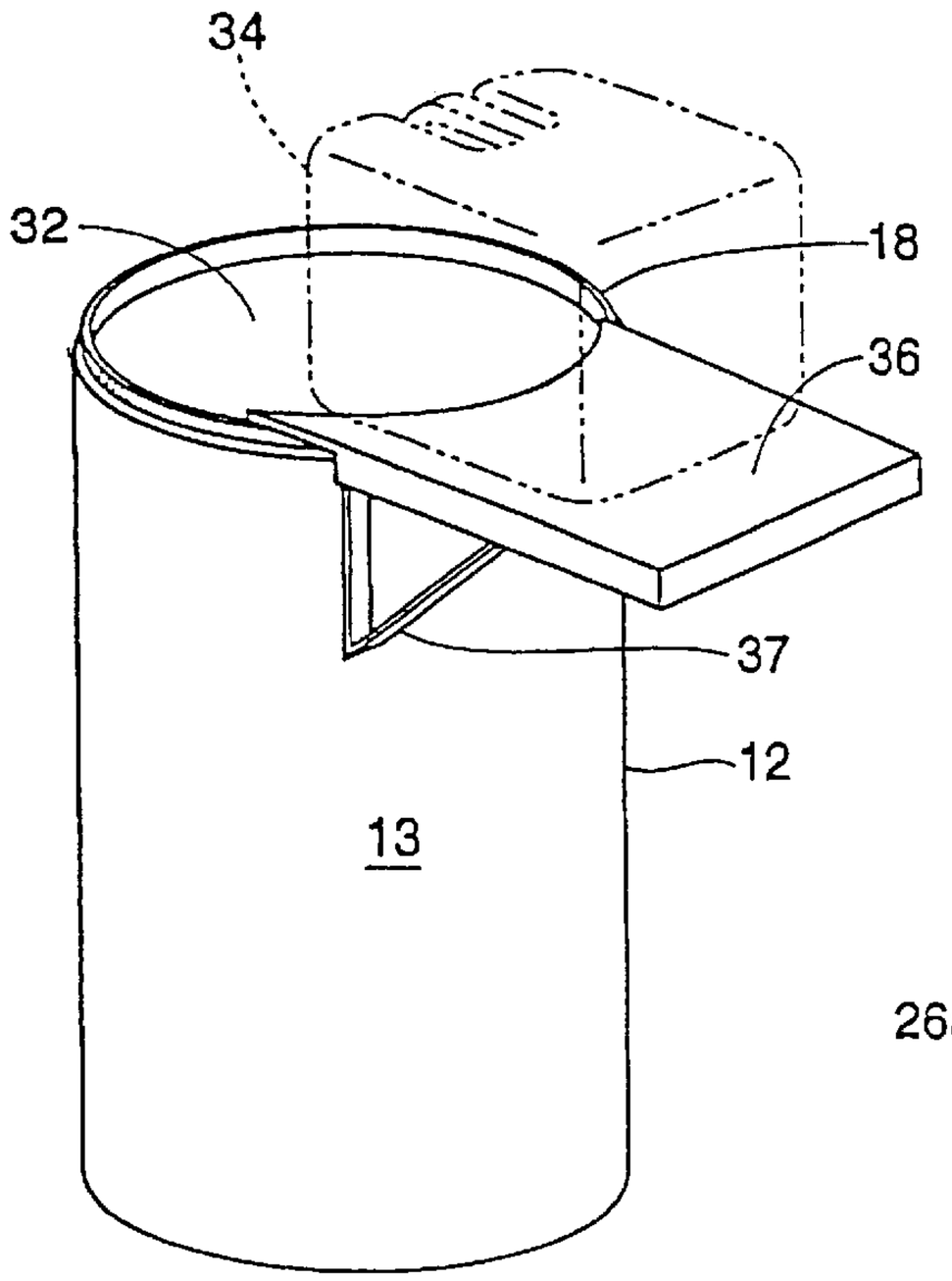
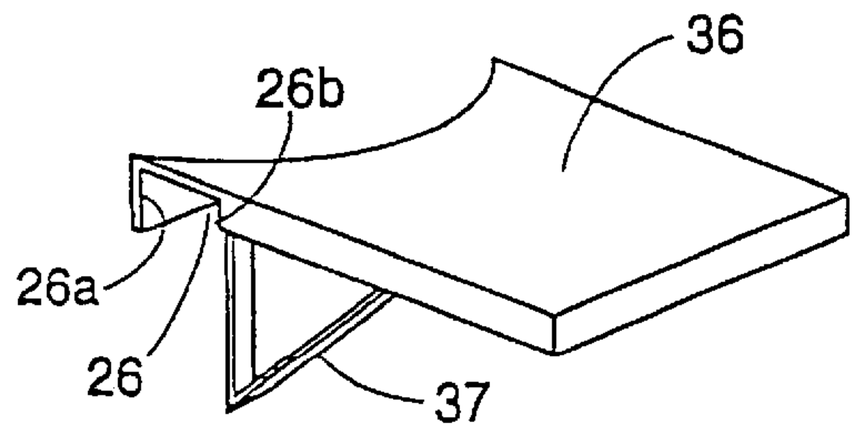


Fig. 7a



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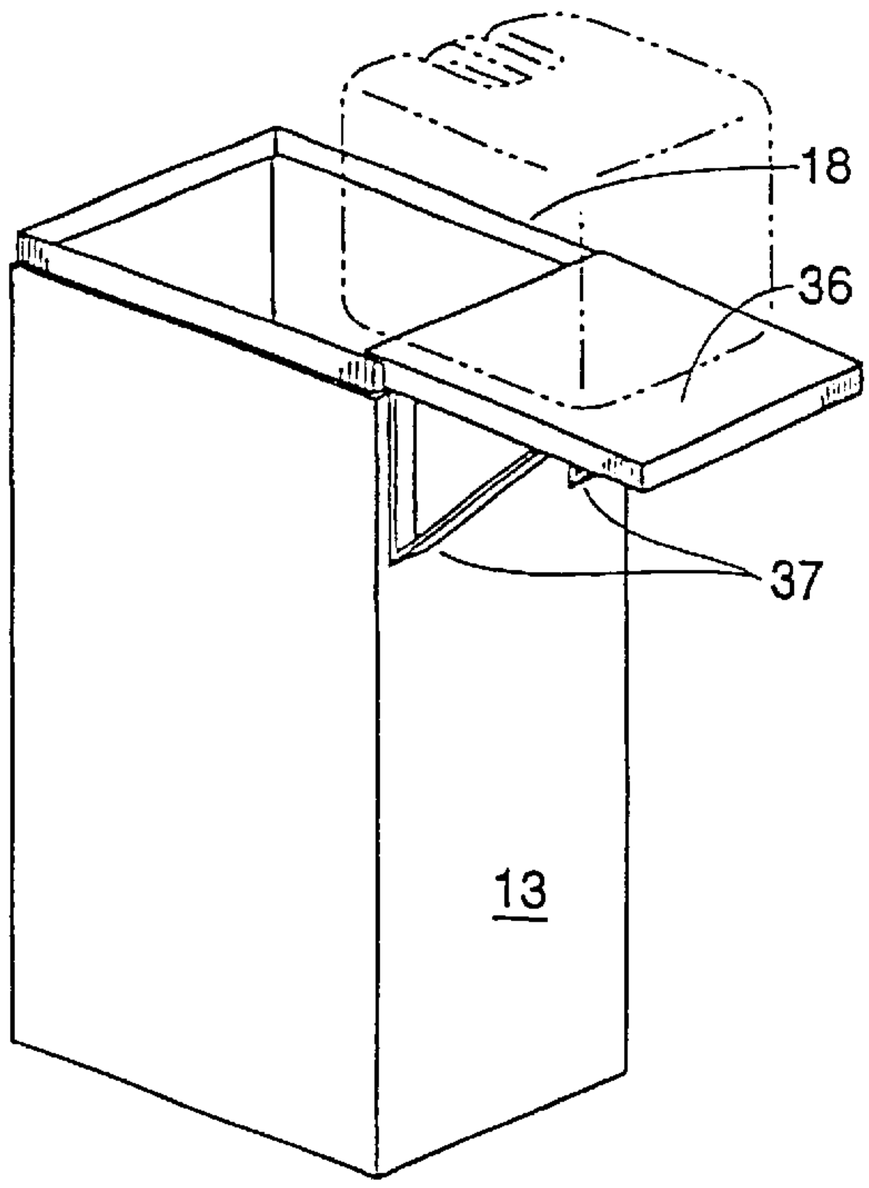


Fig. 7c

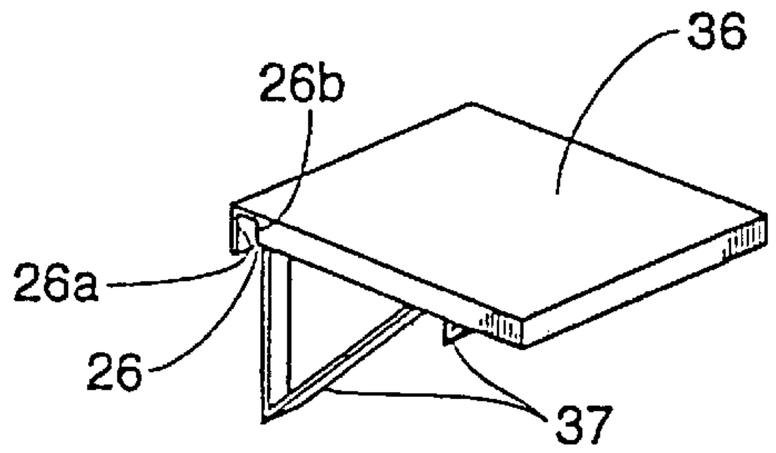


Fig. 7d

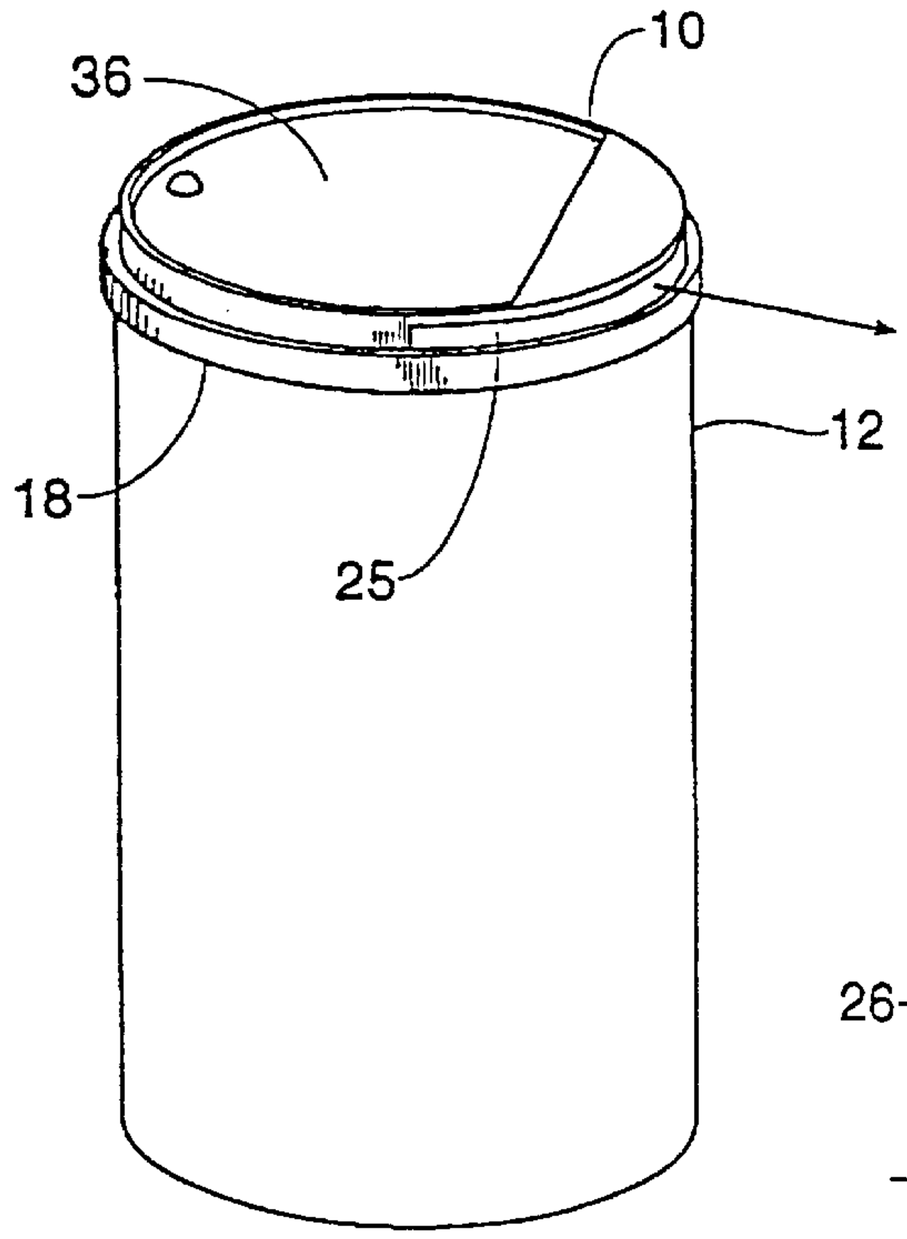


Fig. 8a

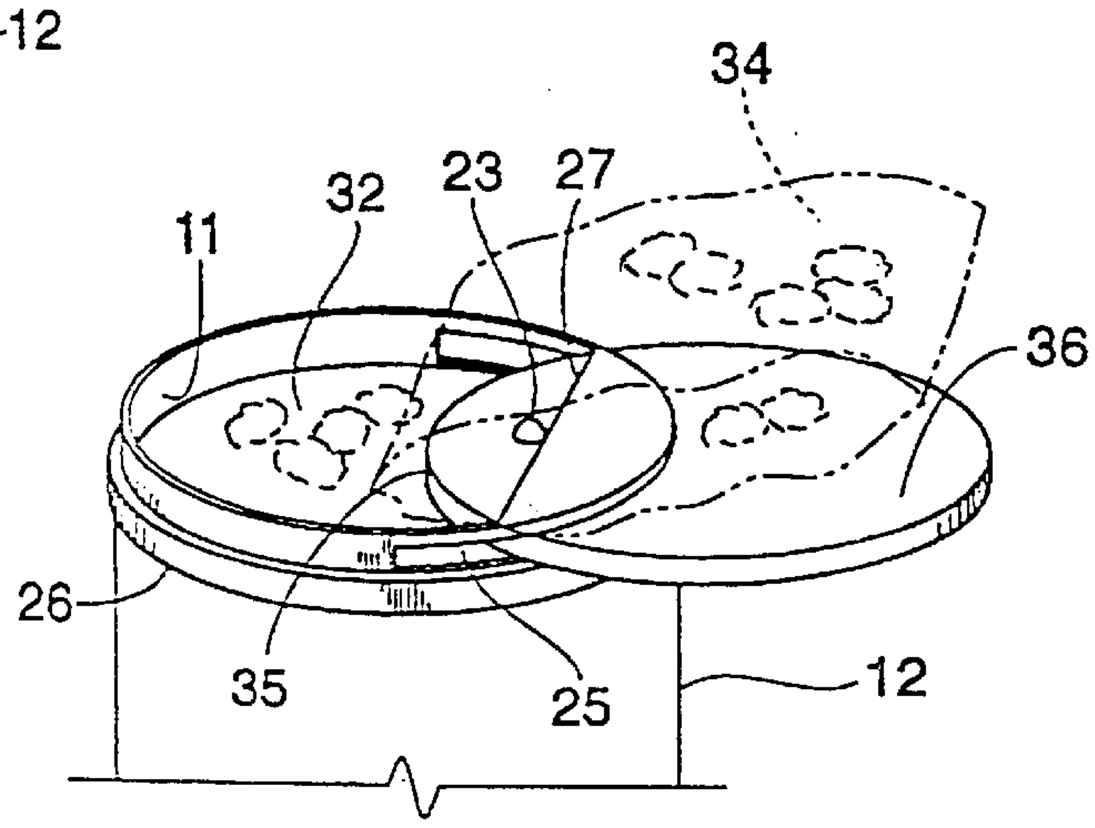


Fig. 8b

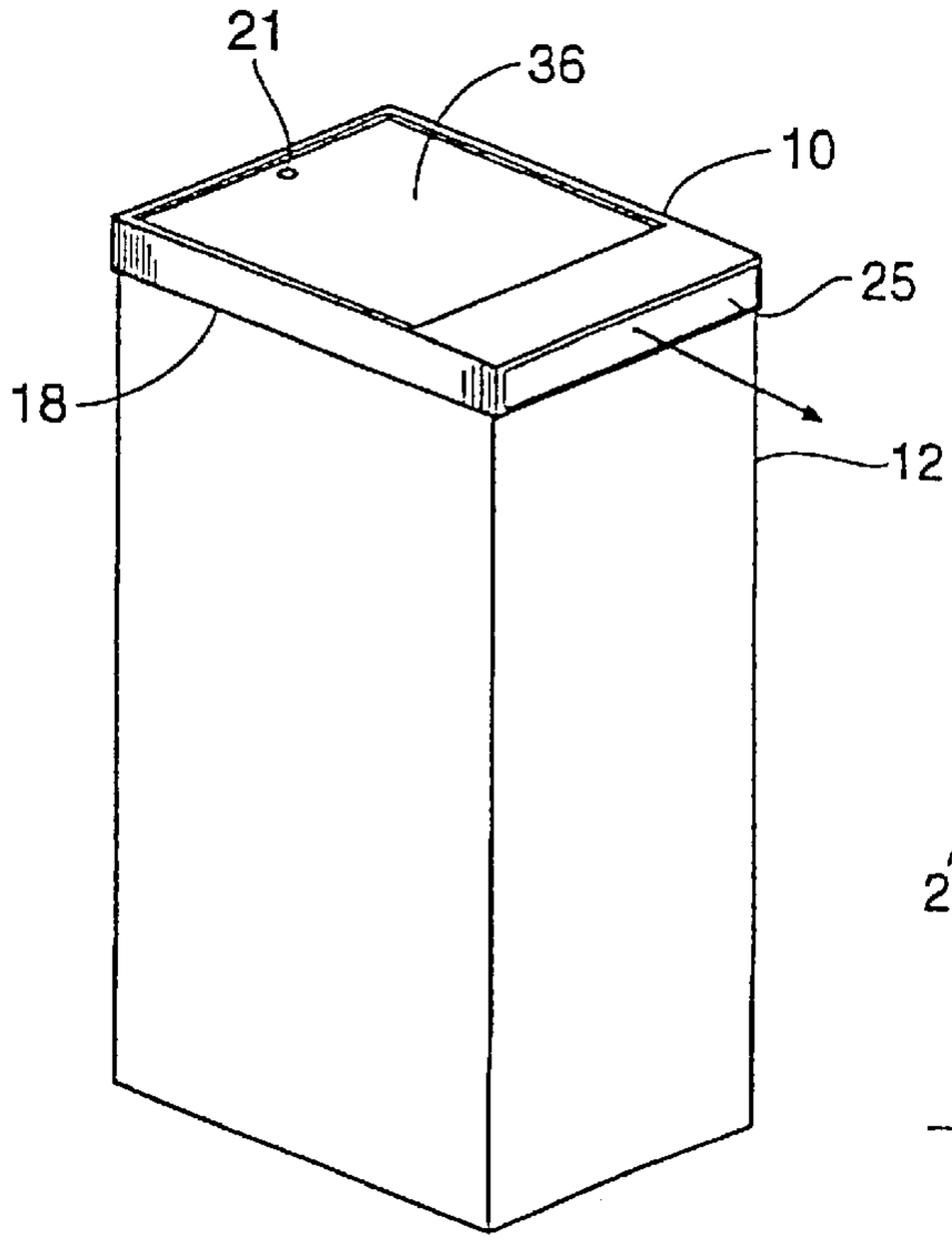


Fig. 8c

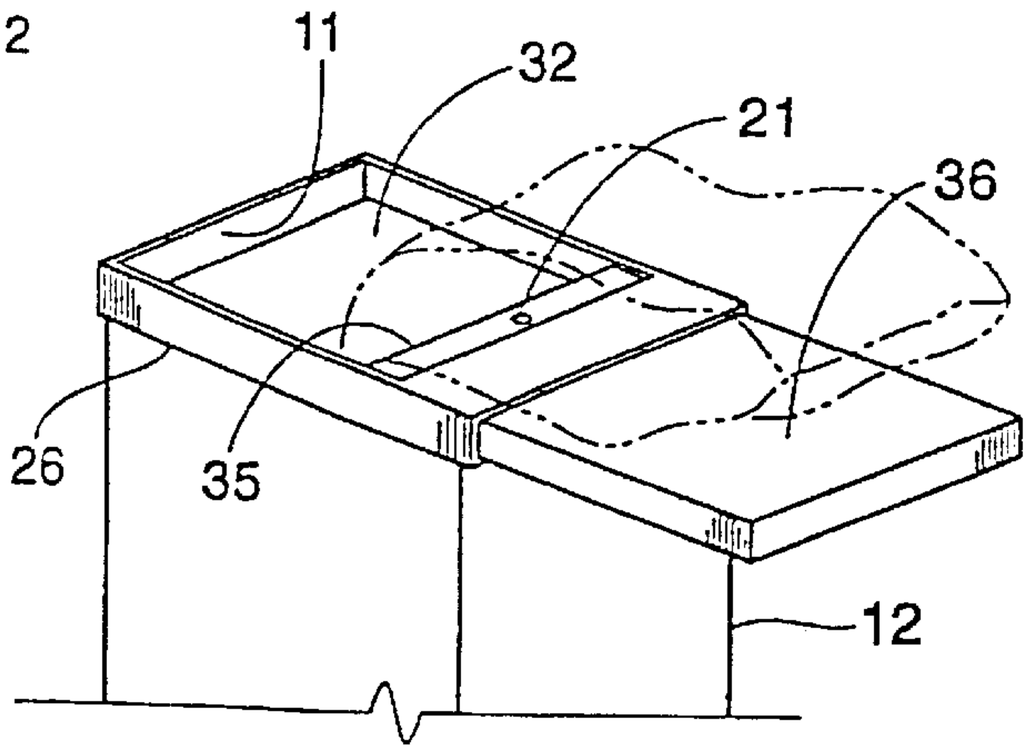


Fig. 8d

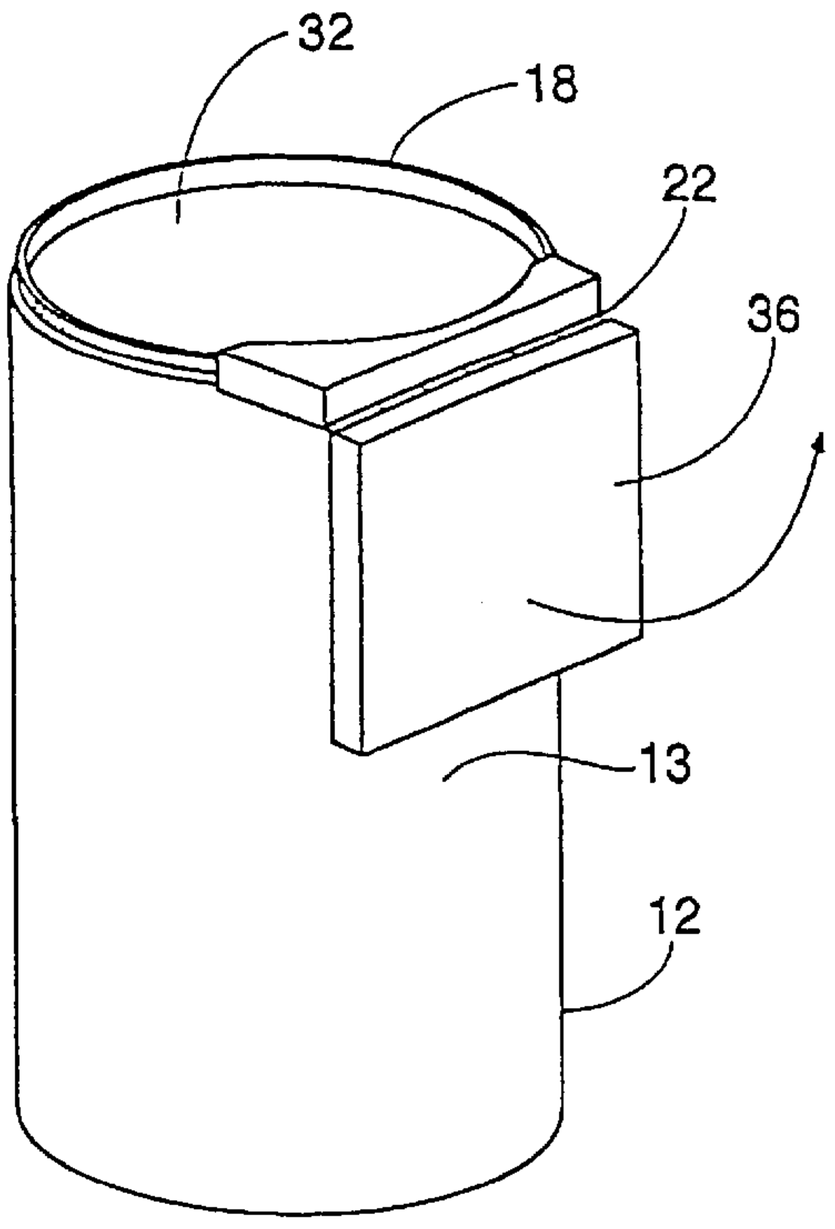
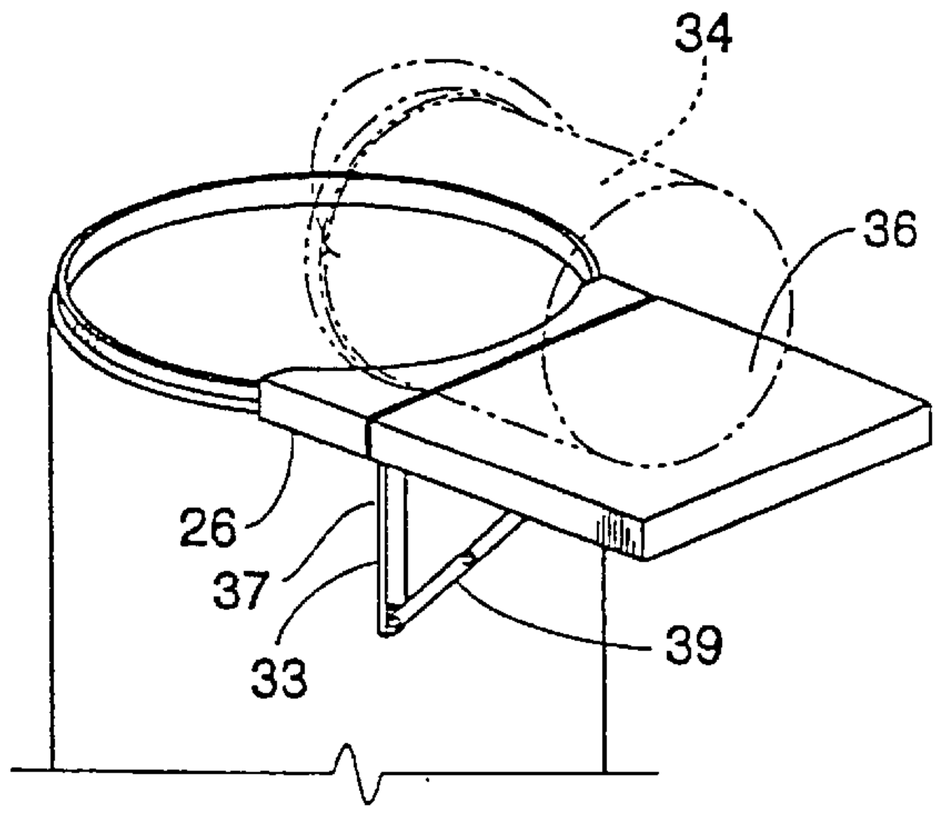


Fig. 9a



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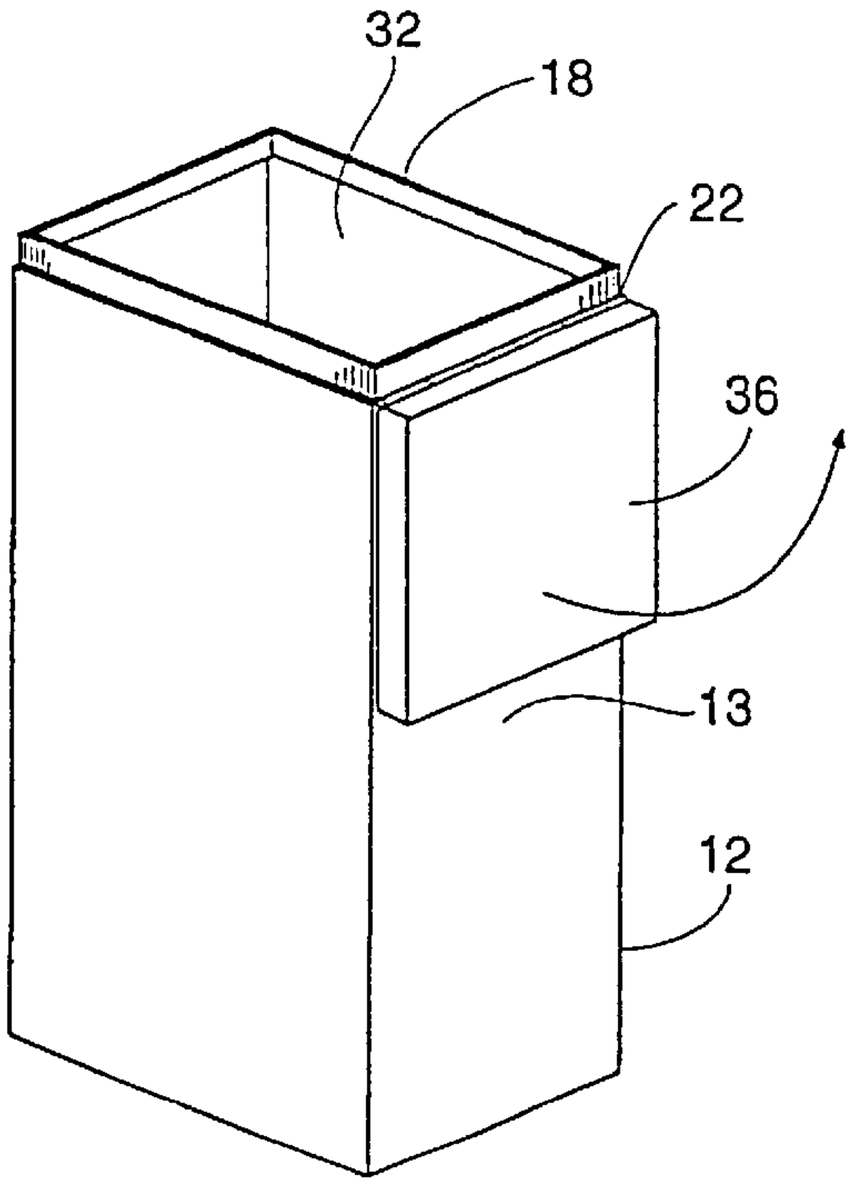

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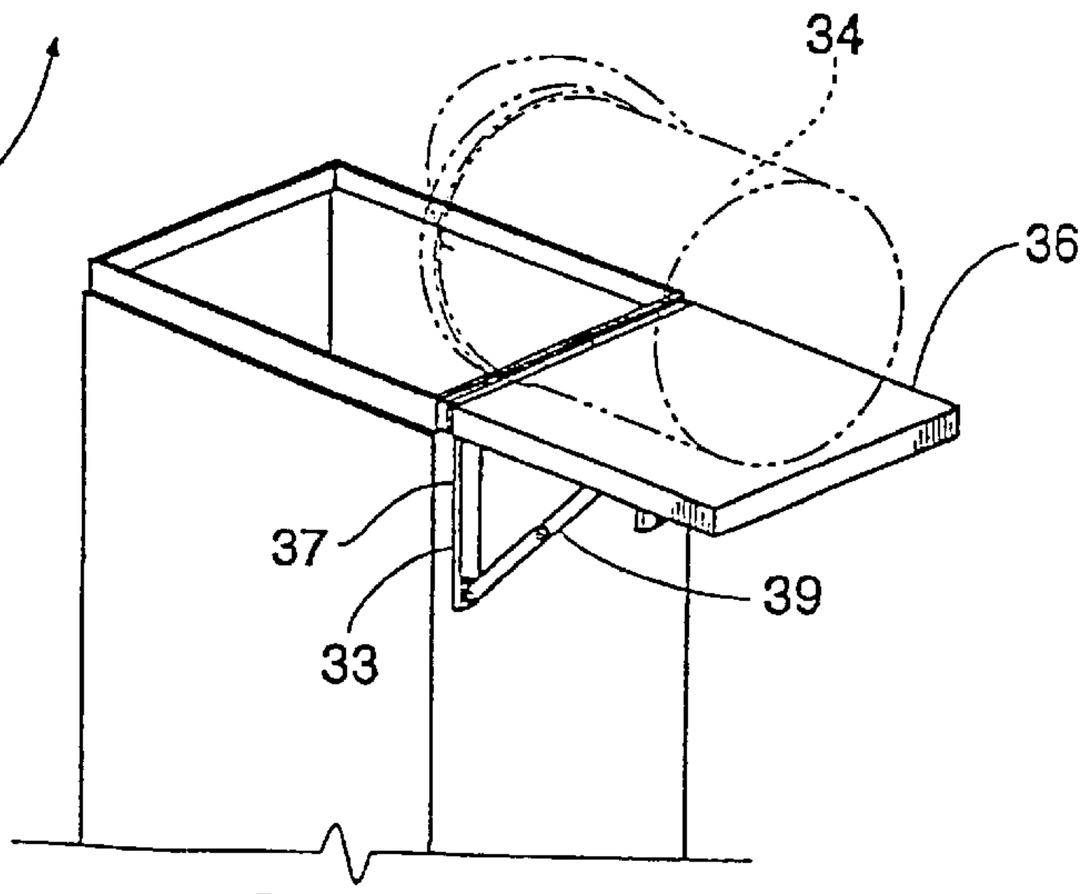


Fig. 9d

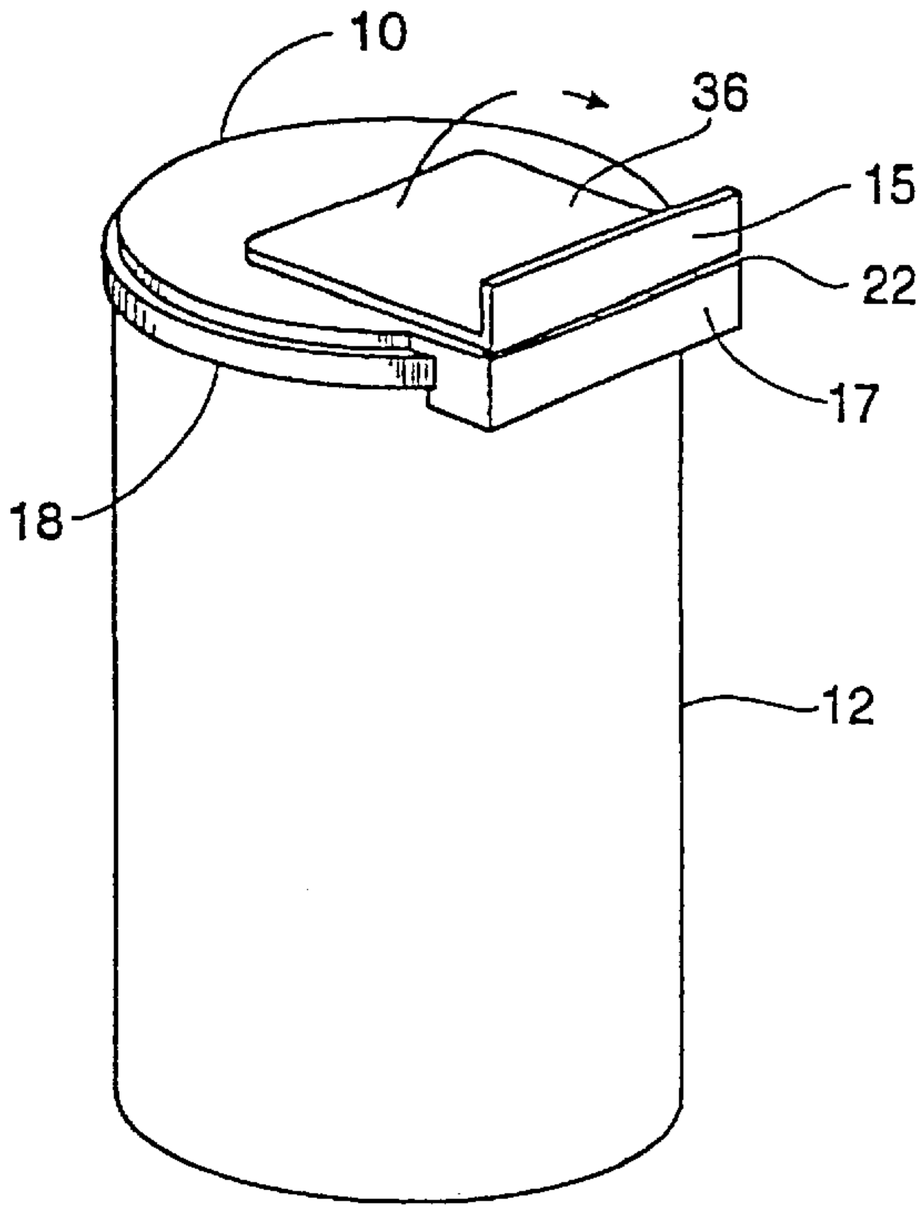


Fig. 10a

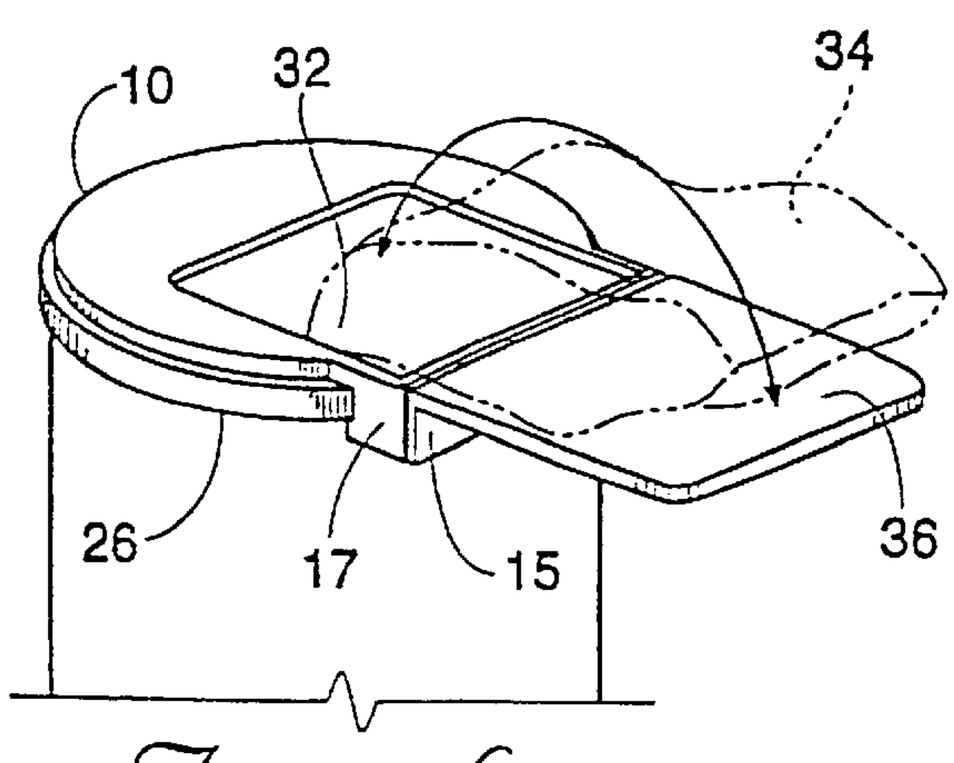
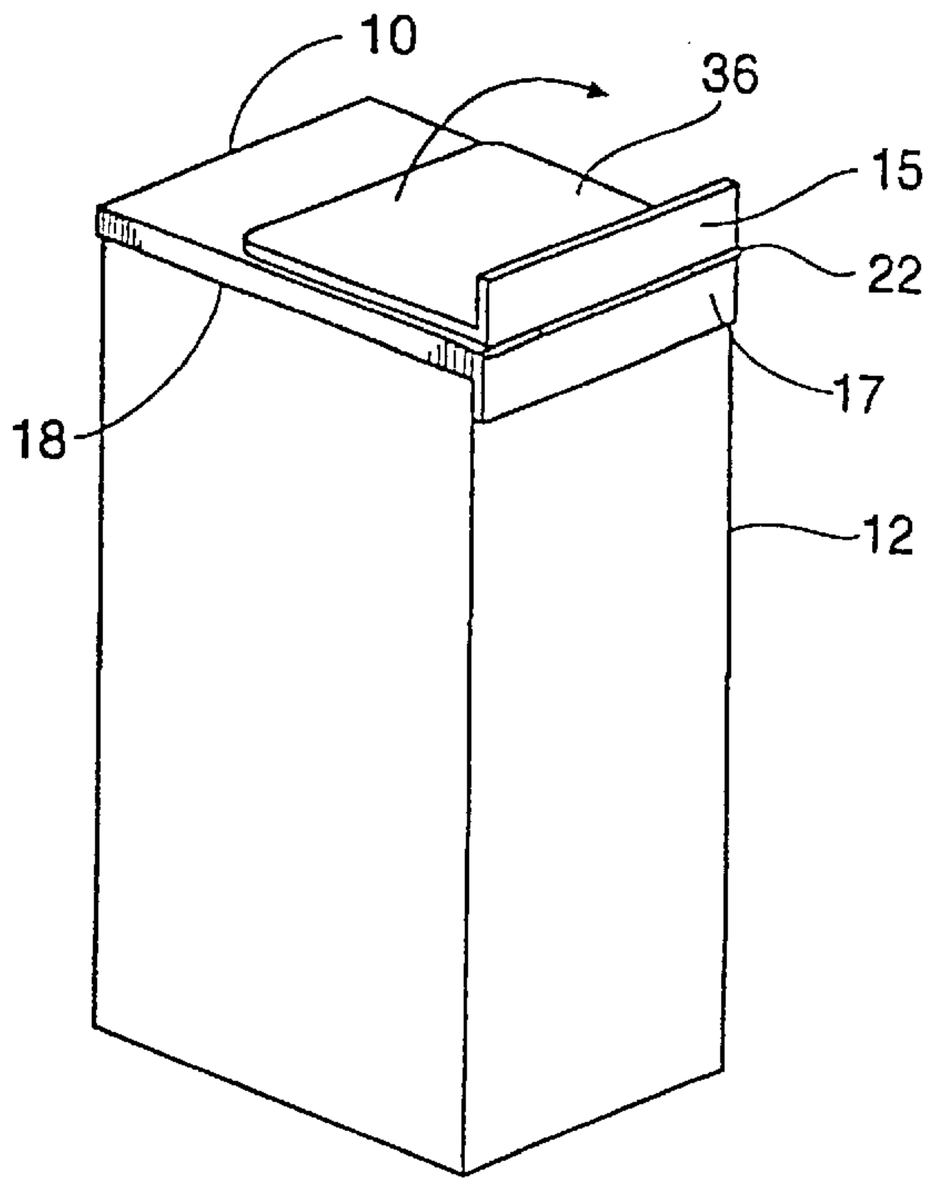


Fig. 10b



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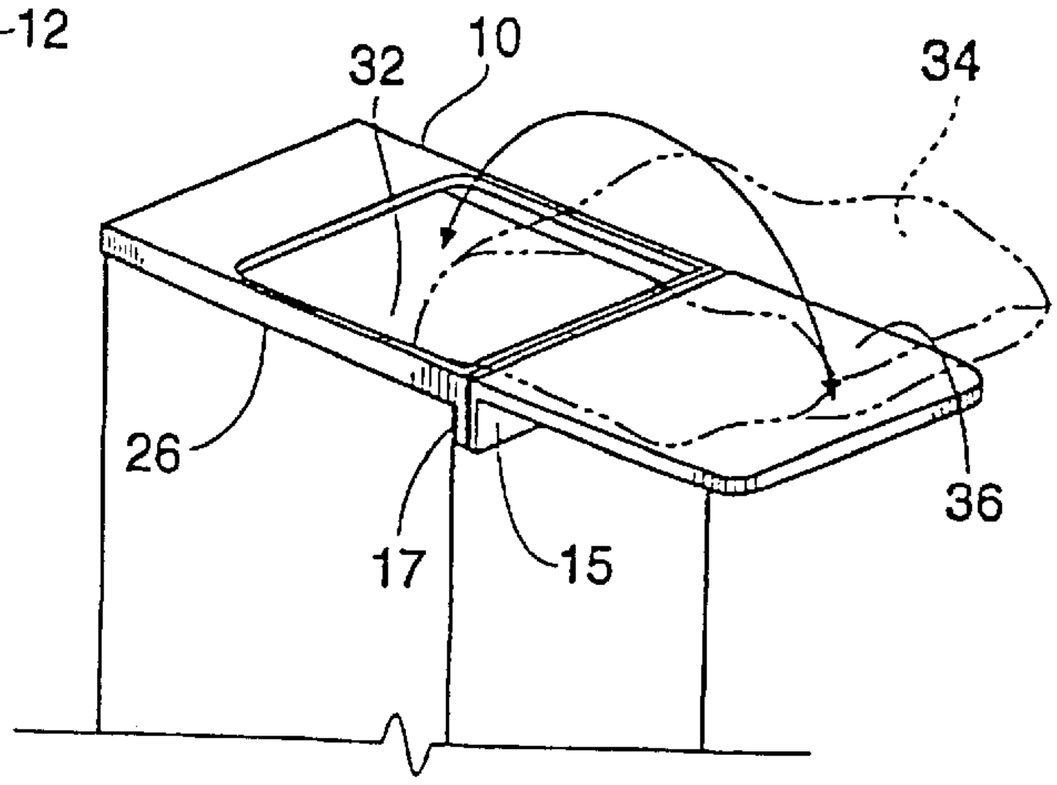


Fig. 10d

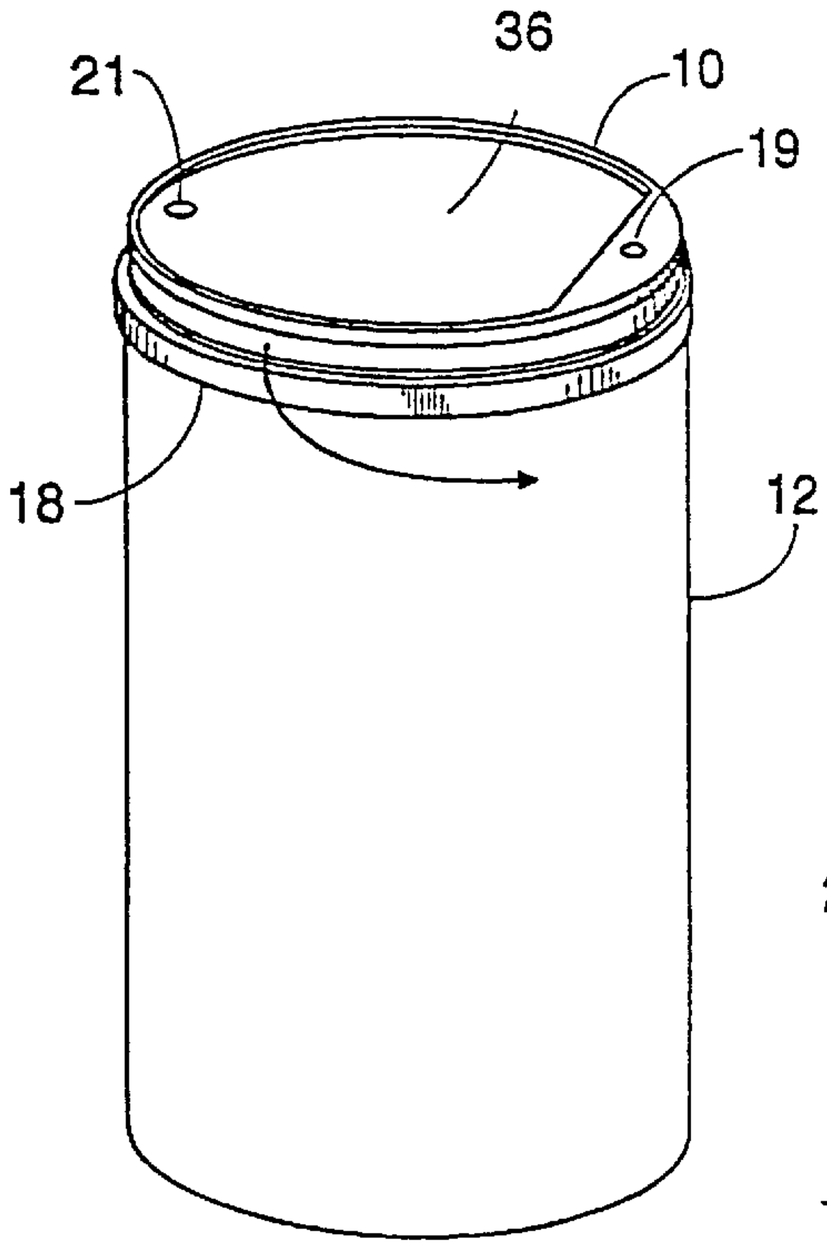


Fig. 11a

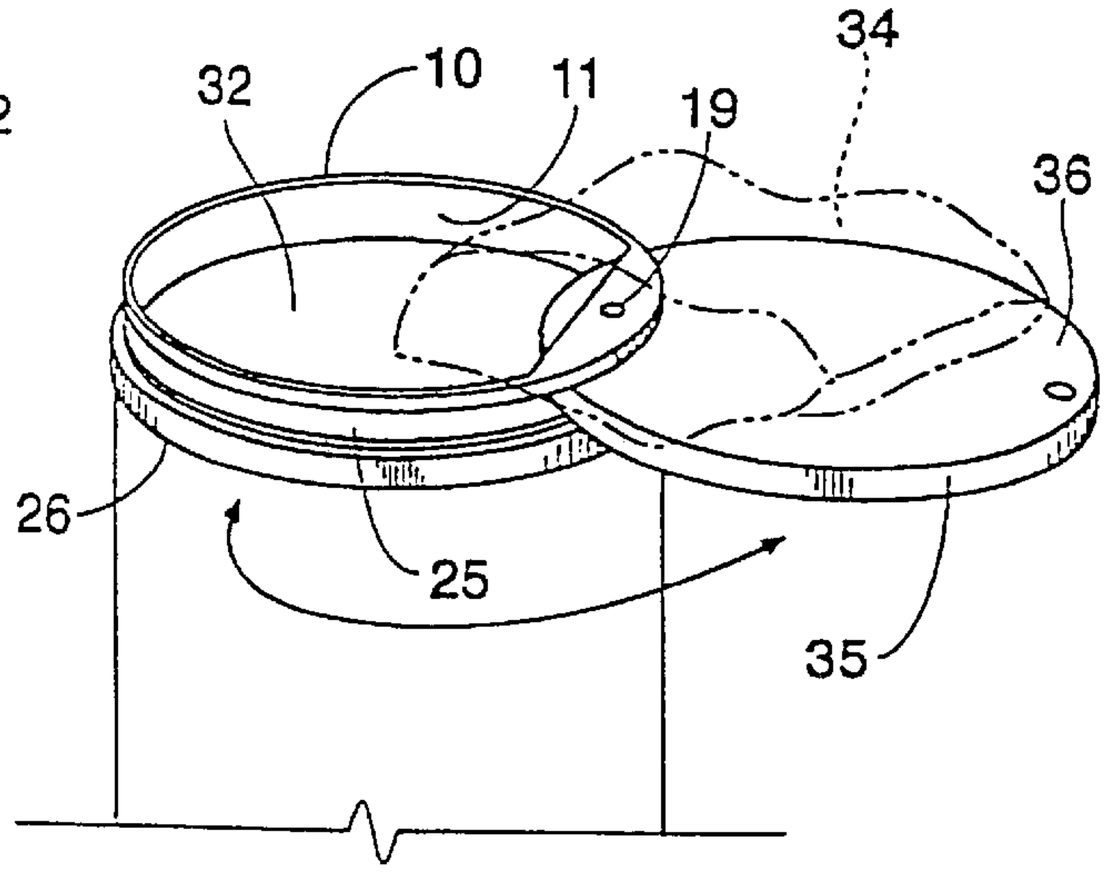


Fig. 11b

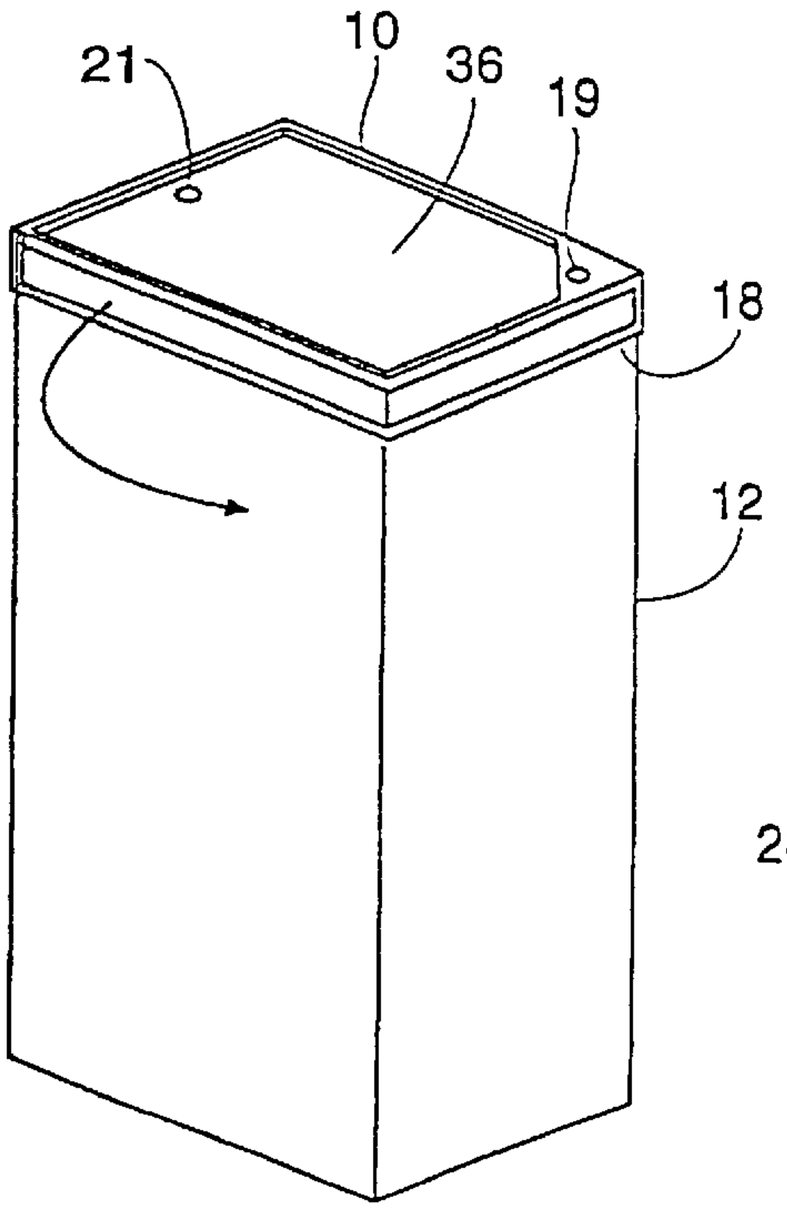


Fig. 11c

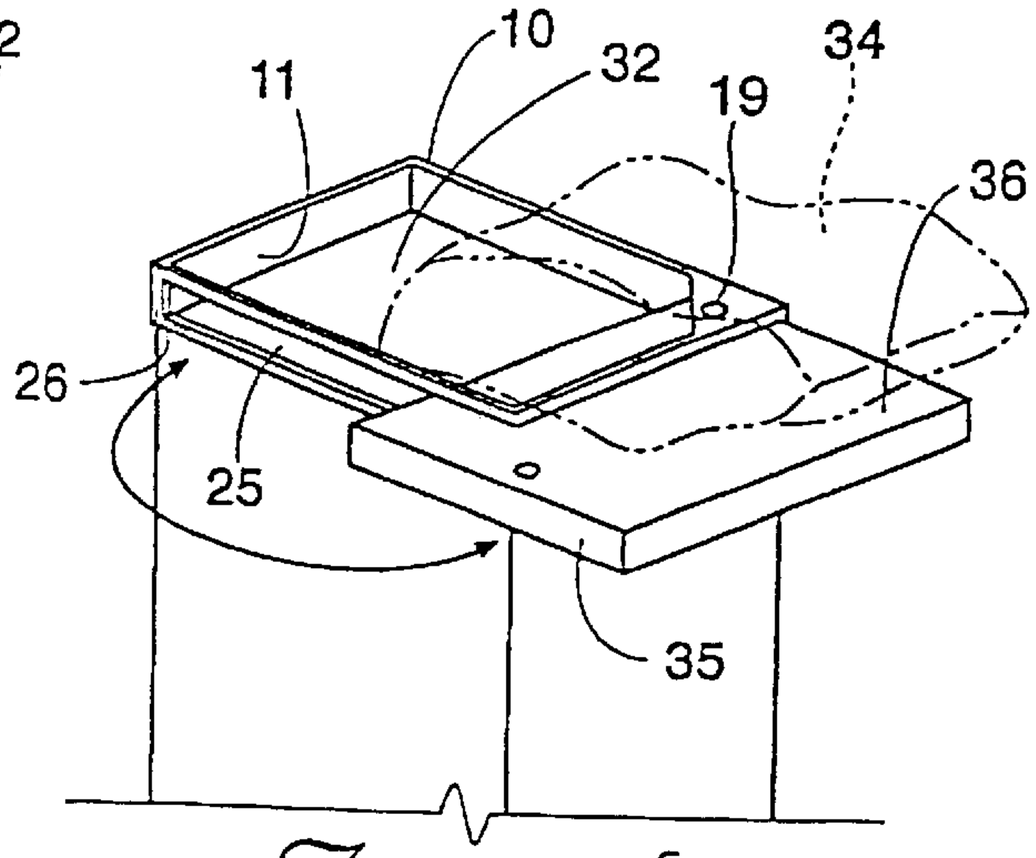


Fig. 11d

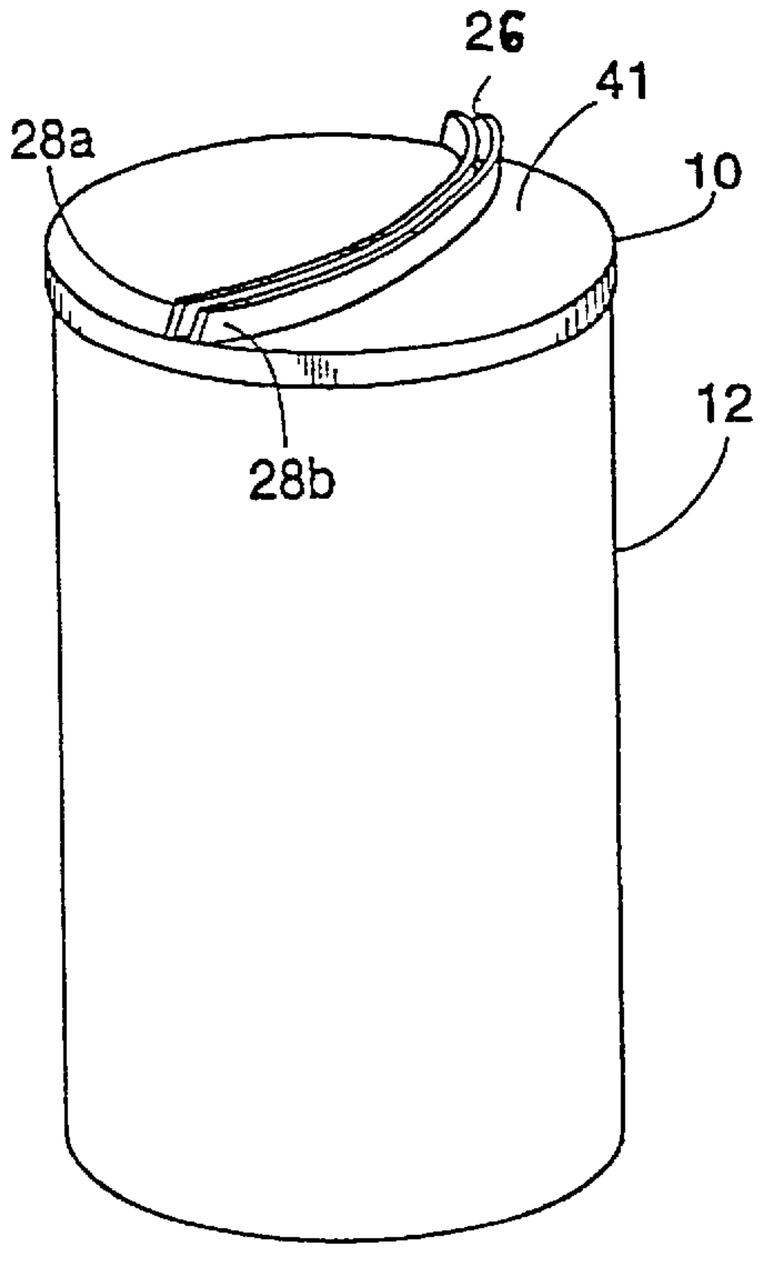


Fig. 12a

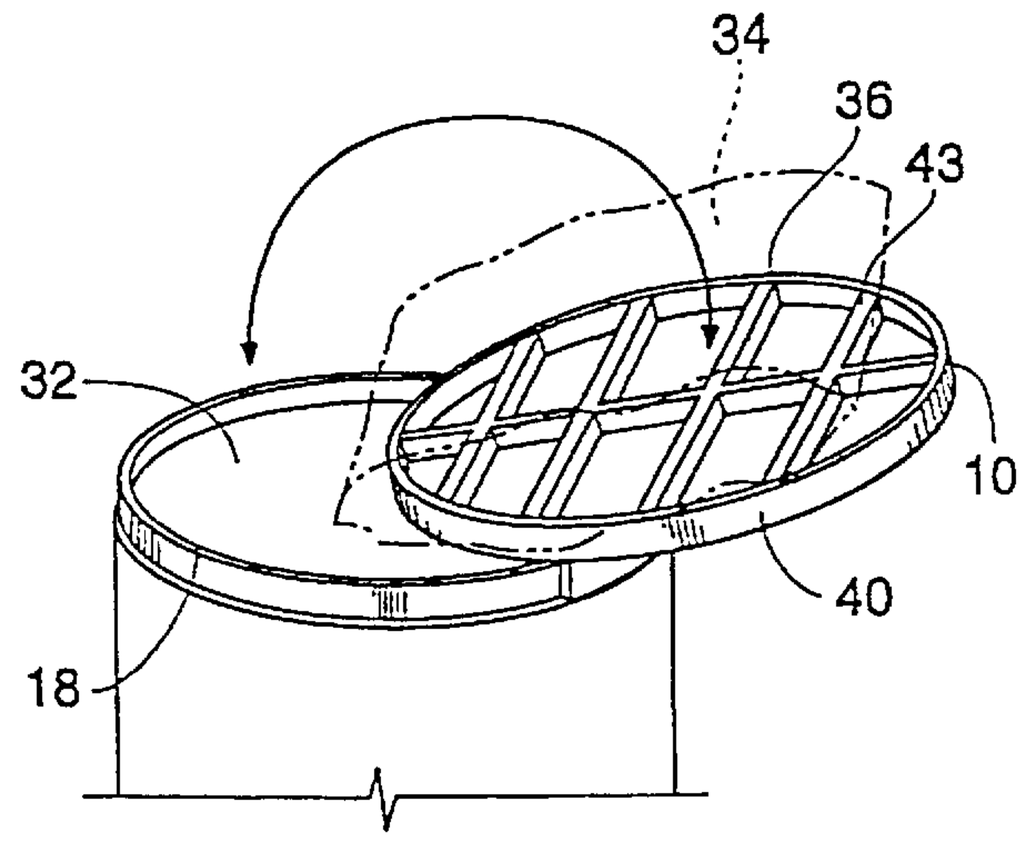
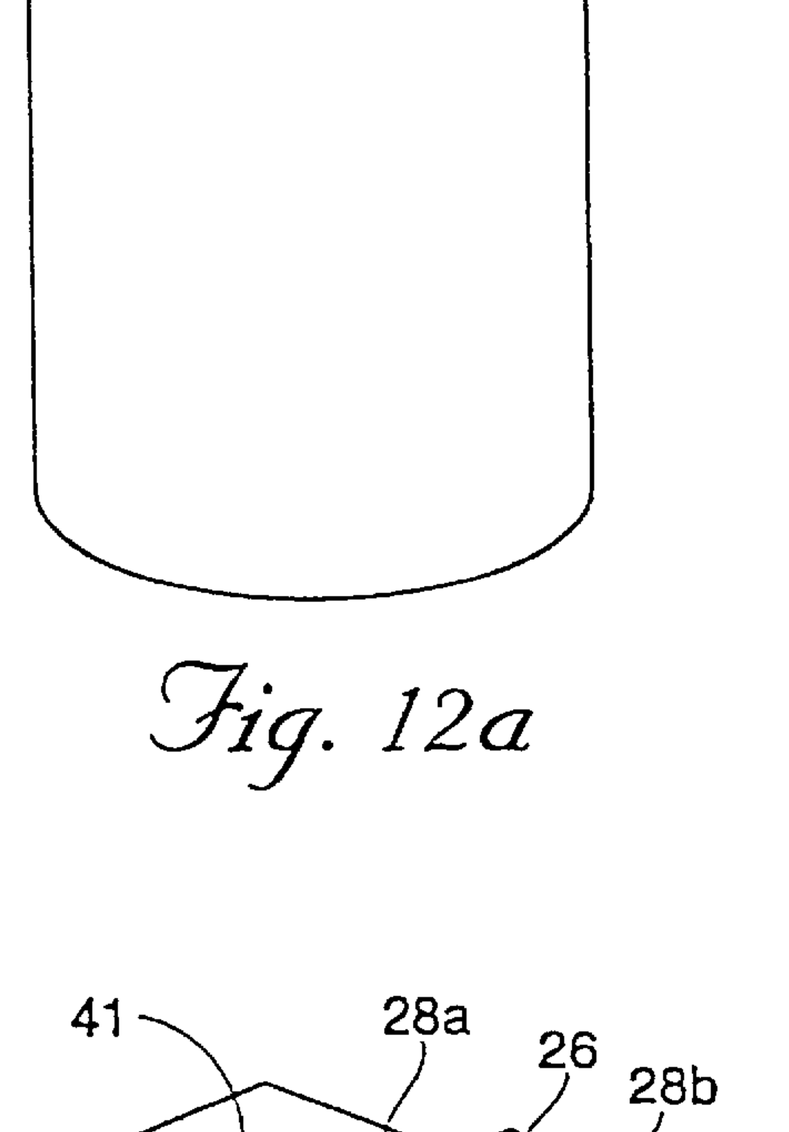


Fig. 12b



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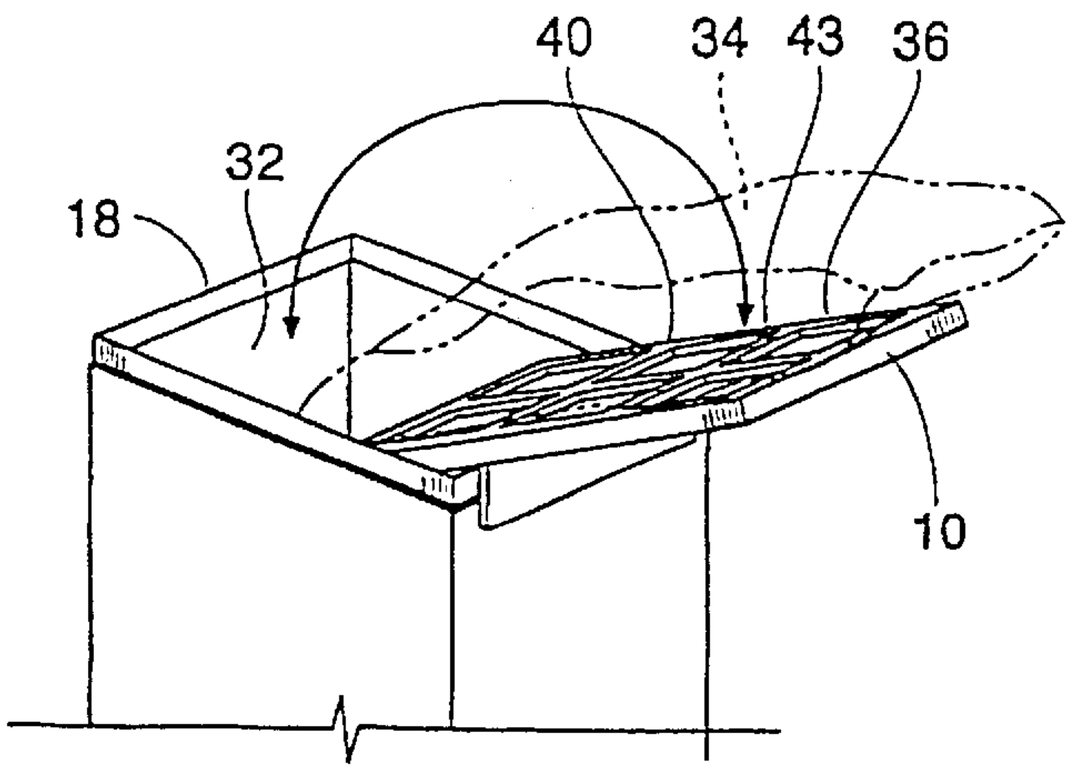

Fig. 12d

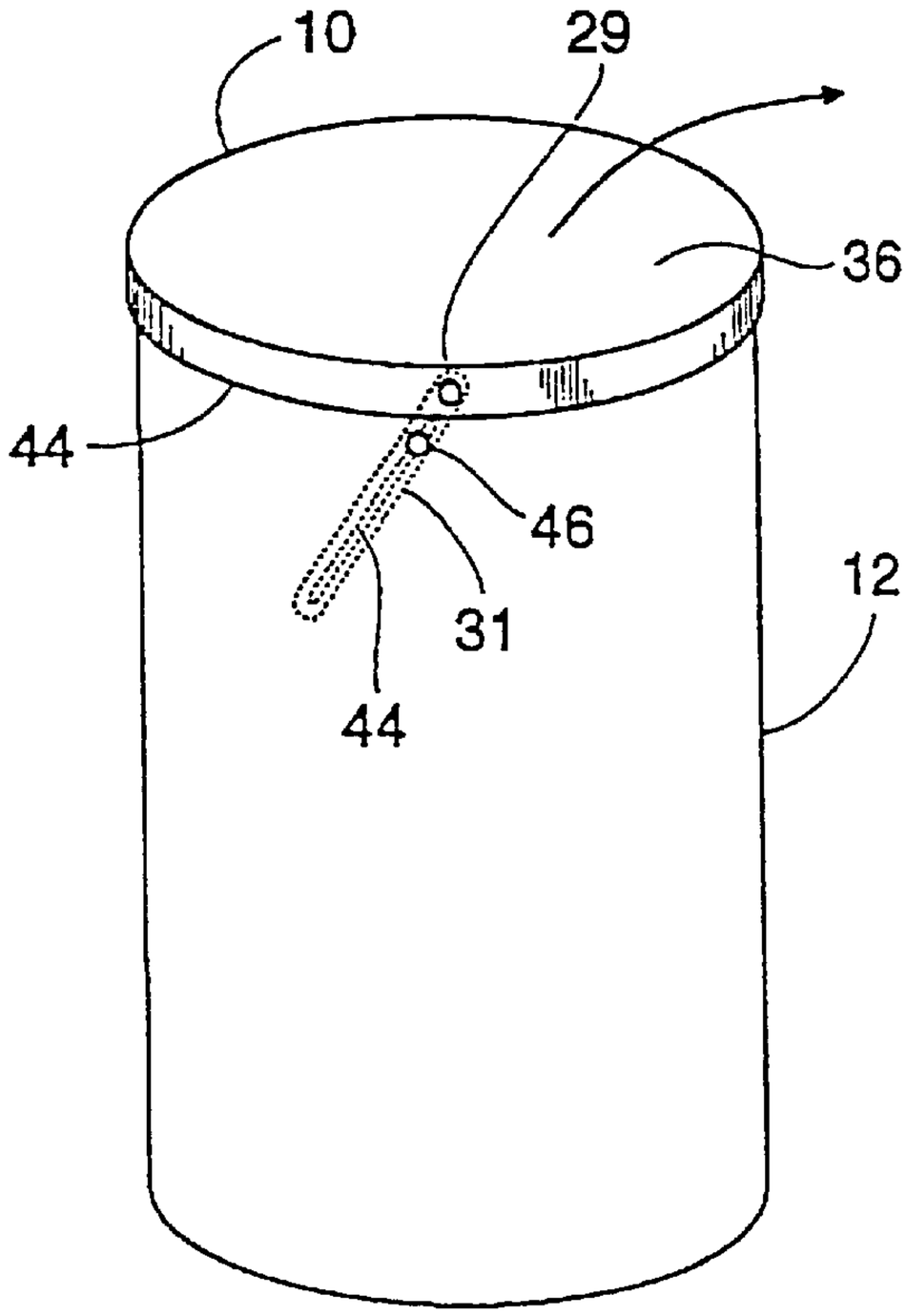

Fig. 13a

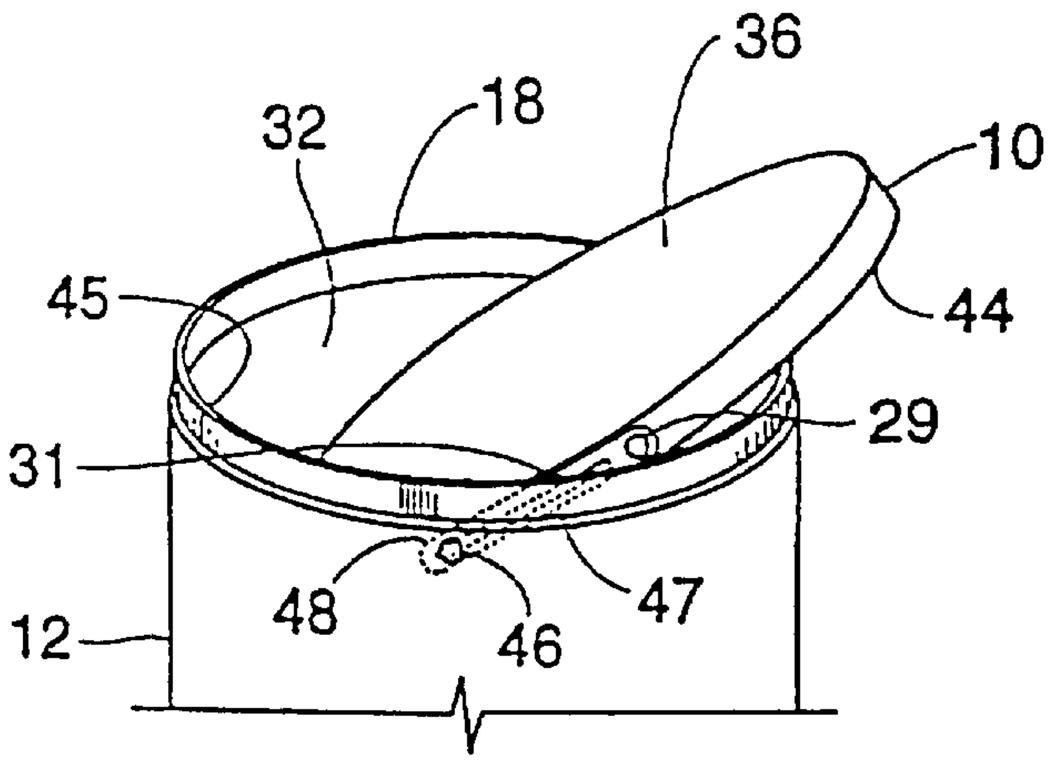

Fig. 13b

CONTAINER LOADER LEDGE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to support surfaces for loading a material or composition of materials into a container or for resting a material or composition of materials on a container so that they may be easily sorted or more easily transferred and/or deposited into the container. The invention more particularly relates to a fitment adapted to receive and support a load, e.g., a heavy bag or other container, during loading or transfer of material into the container proper.

The invention is believed to have application to all situations where it would be beneficial to rest the material to be placed into a container prior to placement in the container. Examples of such situations include, but are not limited to heavy loads of aggregate material that are to be measured into the container, loads of material that are to be sorted, fill and/or transfer prior to placement or deposit in the container or material that is to be mixed. Specifically, but not by way of limitation or exclusion of other applications, the present invention has application with containers like brine tanks. Some containers, such as brine tanks for regenerating the material used in water softeners, are periodically loaded with material, such as bagged rock salt crystal or pellets, that must be lifted from a lower level to the level of the container opening. This task is often difficult and cumbersome because of the weight of the material. The container walls are easily buckled during loading as the person loading rests the material-containing bag on the container opening edge.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention specifically addresses and alleviates the above-noted problems associated with filling a container with heavy or cumbersome material as well as any load that may be temporarily rested prior to being transferred into a container. More particularly, a loader ledge fitment for water softener containers and the like is disclosed, which comprises an outer periphery configured to receive and fit over at least one portion of the container opening. Alternatively, the fitment may be integrally formed with the container to be loaded. The loader ledge provides a perforated cover through which the material may be poured, and a hinged cover which, while in the open position, provides a ledge for resting the material while being deposited. After the material (for example softener salt in the case of a water softener) has been poured into the container, the hinged ledge is rotated to the closed position. Further, the conventional lid supplied by the container manufacturer may be used in conjunction with the present loader ledge fitment when the container is not being loaded.

Alternatively the present invention may be summarized as a fitment for use with or integrally formed with a container for receiving a load of material comprising a supporting perforate or imperforate web and opening. The fitment having a shape substantially conforming to a contour of the container with which the fitment is to be used. The supporting web being circumjacent to the opening and including a ramp structure having a downward slope extending toward the opening. The supporting web including a surface for supporting the load of material. Whereby the load of material may be placed on the surface and a predetermined portion of the load of material may be transferred through the opening into the container.

Additionally the fitment may further include at least one channel having curb structures and the container may

include at least one edge structure having a predetermined shape. The channel may substantially conform to the predetermined shape of the edge structure and extend along and engage a predetermined portion of the edge structure. The fitment may also include at least one bracket structure having at least a first end removably engagable with an exterior surface of the container and at least a second end coupled to the supporting web. The fitment may also include a bracket structure having at least one lockable collapsible lever mechanism.

In another alternative embodiment the fitment may include a supporting web, an opening, and a channel for use in combination with a container having at least one open end including at least one edge structure. The channel in this embodiment is engagable with the edge structure and the fitment includes a slot having an opening. The supporting web is capable of being extended and retracted through the slot so that when the supporting web is extended through the slot the opening is presented.

Additionally, the supporting web may have a retracted position and an edge and the fitment may include an inner wall and the container edge is capable of abutting the inner wall. Further, the supporting web may include a key structure and the opening may include at least one edge capable of engaging the key structure. Additionally, the supporting web may include at least one opening.

Another alternative of the present invention may be described as a fitment for use with a container for receiving a load of material, the fitment including a supporting web, a hinge structure and a channel. The container having at least one open end including at least one edge structure. The channel is engagable with the edge structure and the fitment is hingedly coupled to the supporting web at the hinge structure. The supporting web includes a stop structure and the fitment includes an abutment structure. The stop structure is engagable with the abutment structure such that engagement of the stop structure with the abutment structure places the supporting web in position to receive a load. Further, the fitment may be integral to the edge of the container.

In another alternative embodiment the present invention may be summarized as a fitment for use with a container for receiving a load of material, the fitment comprising a supporting web, a slot, a hinge mechanism and a channel. The container having at least one open end including at least one edge structure. The channel engagable with the edge structure. The fitment including a slot. The supporting web rotatably coupled to the fitment at the hinge mechanism. The slot having sufficient size and spatially orientation so that the supporting web may be rotated on the hinge mechanism and extended out of the slot and retracted back through slot. Whereby when the supporting web is extended through the slot the opening is presented and when the supporting web is retracted through the slot the open end is closed and the container is covered.

Further, the supporting web may include an opening spatially orientated on the supporting web so that a user may grasp the opening to aid in extending the supporting web through the slot. Also, the fitment may be integral to the edge of the container.

Another alternative embodiment of the present invention may be summarized as including a fitment for use with a container for receiving a load of material, the fitment comprising a supporting web surface and a channel. The container having at least one open end including at least one edge structure. The channel engagable with at least one

portion of the edge structure. The channel located on a first fitment surface substantially opposite the supporting web surface.

Further, the channel may include a plurality of curb structures having a predetermined pitch and which are spatially orientated to impart a predetermined angle to the channel. Accordingly, the fitment may be removed from covering the container and the channel may be engaged with at least one portion of the edge so that the supporting web surface and at least a portion of the open end are presented for receiving the load of material.

Another alternative embodiment of the present invention may be summarized as a fitment for use with a container for receiving a load of material with the fitment comprising a hinge structure, a bearing pin structure, a supporting web surface, a bracket, and a channel. The container having at least one open end including at least one edge structure. The bearing pin structure mounted to the container. The channel engagable with at least one portion of the edge structure. The channel located on a first fitment surface substantially opposite the supporting web surface. The fitment including an inside rim surface. The container includes an inside surface. A lockable collapsible bracket coupled to the inside rim surface at the hinge structure and to the container at the bearing pin structure. The bearing pin structure slidably engaged with the bracket. The fitment pivotally coupled to the bracket at hinge structure. Accordingly, in this embodiment the fitment may be lifted off of the edge of the container until the bearing pin structure engages a distal end stop structure of the bracket.

Alternatively, the present invention may be generally summarized as a method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted or placed from a lower level to the opening level of the first container. The method comprising the steps of:

Providing the first container with an open end including an edge structure.

Hingedly attaching an apertured cover to the edge.

Rotating the hingedly attached cover between a closed position and an opened position relative to the opening.

Lifting the second container and the material contained therein from the the lower level to rest upon the opened cover and transferring the material into first container.

The method could also include the step of providing a ramped surface extending from the hingedly attached cover. Additionally, the method could include the step of resting the opened cover on the ramped surface.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1***a* is a perspective view of the container loader ledge fitment of the present invention installed upon a conventional water softener brine tank with material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **1***b* is a perspective view of the container loader ledge fitment of the present invention installed upon a conventional water softener brine tank with the material in phantom being loaded into the container.

FIG. **1***c* is a prespective view of the container loader ledge fitment of the present invention in combination with a conventional water softner brine tank showing the material being loaded in phantom.

FIG. **2***a* is an enlarged perspective view of the loader ledge fitment of the present invention with the cover shown in the open position and material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **2***b* is an enlarged perspective view of the loader ledge fitment of the present invention with the cover shown in the closed position.

FIG. **2***c* is an enlarged perspective view of the loader ledge fitment of the present invention but showing an alternate, downwardly angled support web.

FIG. **3** is an enlarged top plan view of the loader ledge fitment of the present invention with the cover removed for ease of viewing.

FIG. **4** is a cross sectional side view of the loader ledge fitment of the present invention, taken along line **4**—**4** of FIG. **2***b* and showing the cover, also illustrated in the views of FIGS. **1***a,* **1***b,* and **2***a,* in the closed position with the lid shown in phantom.

FIG. **5***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **5***b* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **6***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **6***b* is a perspective view of the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **6***a*.

FIG. **6***c* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **6***d* is a perspective view of the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **6***c*.

FIG. **7***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **7***b* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **7***a*.

FIG. **7***c* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **7***d* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **7***c*.

FIG. **8***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **8***b* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment disclosed in Figure and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **8***c* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **8***d* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **8***c* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **9***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **9***b* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **9***a* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **9***c* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **9***d* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **9***c* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **10***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **10***b* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **10***a* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **10***c* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **10***d* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **10***c* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **11***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **11***b* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **11***a* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **11***c* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **11***d* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **11***c* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **12***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **12***b* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **12***a* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **12***c* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **12***d* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **12***c* and the material to be loaded shown in phantom.

FIG. **13***a* is a perspective view illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention in combination with a container.

FIG. **13***b* is a perspective view illustrating the alternative embodiment of the present invention disclosed in FIG. **13***a*.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Although the disclosure hereof is detailed and exact to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, the physical embodiments herein disclosed merely exemplify the invention which may be embodied in other specific structure. While the preferred embodiment has been described, the details may be changed without departing from the invention, which is defined by the claims.

With particular reference to FIG. **1***a,* the container loader ledge fitment **10** of the present invention is adapted to be removably seated on a container **12**, e.g., a conventional water softener brine tank. Although any material having appropriate characteristics may be used, the fitment **10** is preferably molded of a conventional plastic material, or in the alternative, the fitment **10** may be fabricated from a machined plywood sheet. Alternatively, as seen in FIG. **1***c,* the fitment may be integrally molded with a container **12**. The fitment **10** defines a planar surface **14** having a peripheral portion **16** formed there about. Peripheral portion **16** is engagable with the edge **18** of tank **12**, as is best seen in FIG. **4**, or, as seen in FIG. **1***c* integrally molded to the container **12**. The loader ledge fitment **10** may further comprise a cover **20** hingedly attached to the planar surface **14**. Hinging means, seen as conventional double-leaf hinges **22**, permit the cover **20** to be rotated between an opened position, seen in FIG. **2***a,* and a closed position as seen in FIG. **2***b.* Accordingly, it should be understood that a variety of different hinging means could be used in conjunction with the present invention including, but not limited to, cup and ball hinges, pintle hinges, double pintle hinges, spring hinges, gate hinges, multiple hinges with one bolt, and link hinges.

Further, in a preferred embodiment, the cover **20** may be provided with apertures **24**. Apertures **24** permit the fitment **10** to be made with less manufacturing material, while retaining the necessary rigidity and strength to support heavy material-laden containers. The fitment **10** includes a major aperture **32** for receiving the materials supported on the opened cover. Aperture **32**, as shown in FIGS. **1***a,* **1***b,* and **2***a* is preferably relatively enlarged to receive the salt or other bagged material. Referring particularly to FIG. **1***b,* the material **34** is seen being transferred into the container **12** through the aperture **32**. (Shown in phantom as the reference numeral **34**). However, as will be apparent to a person of ordinary skill in the art after reading this disclosure, aperture **32** may be composed of one or more openings and said aperture **32** need only be large enough to allow passage of the salt or other bagged material **34** that is to be transferred into the container **12**.

The invention contemplates resting the material **34**, (seen in phantom) on top of the opened cover **20** where the contents may be poured through the major aperture **32** and supporting web **36**, as seen in FIG. **1***b*. The supporting web **36** is provided with apertures **38** to provide strength and permit additional passageway for the poured material **34**. In order to accomplish this feature, a ramp **40** is provided to support the opened cover **20** and the bagged material **34** resting thereon. Further, as seen in FIG. **2***c,* the supporting web **36** may be optionally angled downward to provide enhanced pouring of material **34**. After the material has been poured into the container **12**, the hinged cover **20** is rotated to the closed position until further loading is desired. As seen in phantom in FIGS. **1***a* and **4**, a conventional lid **42**, as supplied by the container manufacturer, may be placed directly over the fitment **10** when the fitment **10** is not in loading use.

With particular reference to FIG. **4**, it can be seen that the peripheral portion **16** of loader fitment **10** is further provided with a circumferential channel **26** adapted to engagingly receive the edge **18** of tank **12**. The channel **26** is generally U-shaped in cross section and includes a pair of oppositely disposed upstanding curbs **28***a,* **28***b*. The channel **26** is further provided with at least one attachment means, seen as thumb screws **30** in FIGS. **3** and **4**. It is to be understood that although the preferred attachment means includes conventional, manually operated thumb screws, any disengagable attachment means able to securely attach the fitment against the tank **12** edge **18** may be used.

Alternatively, referring to FIGS. **5***a* and **5***b,* the present invention may be practiced simply by providing a fitment **10** that comprises a supporting web or structure **36** and an aperture or opening **32**. The shape of the fitment **10** being adapted to conform to shape of the container **12** with which the fitment **10** is designed to be used. Likewise the aperture **32** may be of any functionally desired shape or design.

Accordingly, as alternatively illustrated in FIGS. **6***a* through **6***d* the fitment **10** may be further modified so that the aperture **32** is more centrally located and the support struc-

ture **36** includes a ramp **40** which is circumjacent the aperture **32** and extends along a downward slope of the ramp **40** from peripheral portion **16** to aperture **32**. The optional downward slope of the ramp **40** enhances unloading of the predetermined material **34**, seen as cans in these views, through the aperture **32**. Again, the shape of the fitment **10** may be adapted to conform to shape of the container **12** with which the fitment **10** is designed to be used. Likewise, as previously noted, the aperture **32** may be of any functionally desired shape or design. It is to be understood that, while the Figures show a removable fitment, it is within the scope of this invention to include fitments, which are integrally formed with the container to be filled.

Referring now to FIGS. **7***a* through **7***d* another alternative embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In these embodiments the container **12** may, again be of any functional shape desired and the fitment **10** is designed to functionally engage the shape of the container **12**. The fitment **10** includes a channel **26** having curbs **28***a* and **28***b*. The channel **26** is designed to conform to the shape of edge **18** and extends along and engages a predetermined portion of the edge **18** of the container **12**. Brackets **37** are provided to engage a predetermined side **13** of the container **12** and provide support for the supporting web **36** and material to be supported which is integral to the channel **26** and coupled to the brackets **37**. In the views of FIGS. **7***a* and **7***c,* the web **36** is seen supporting a liquid material **34**, by way of example. The supporting web **36** may be easily removed from the container **12** by simply lifting the supporting web **36** and disengaging the channel **26** from the edge **18**.

Referring now to FIGS. **8***a* through **8***d* another alternative embodiment of the present invention is disclosed. As previously noted, the container **12** may be of any functional shape desired and the fitment **10** is designed to functionally engage the shape of the container **12**. In this embodiment channel **26** is designed to conform to the shape of edge **18** and extends along and engages the edge **18** of the container **12**. Fitment **10** is provided with a slot **25**. Slot **25** is of sufficient size to allow the supporting web **36** to be extended and retracted through it. When supporting web **36** is extended through slot **25** aperture **32** is presented and the material **34** to be deposited may be rested. In these views, the material **34** is seen as stones or other heavy particles. When supporting web **36** is retracted through slot **25** so that its edge **35** abuts inner wall **11** of the fitment **10** aperture **32** is closed and the container **12** is covered. Referring to FIGS. **8***a* and **8***b* the supporting web **36** may be seen to include a boss or key structure **23**. Boss **23** is provided to allow the user a handle or knob to grasp and to act as a stop to engage aperture edge **27** and prevent supporting web **36** from being completely extended through the slot **25**. Alternatively, referring to FIGS. **8***c* and **8***d,* supporting web **36** may simply be provided an opening **21** that may be grasped by the user to aid in extending the supporting web **36** through the slot **25**. In the embodiment disclosed in FIGS. **8***c* and **8***d* there is no stop to engage aperture edge **27** and prevent supporting web **36** from being completely extended through the slot **25**. Alternatively, referring to FIGS. **8***a*–**8***d,* the fitment **10** may be integrally formed with the container **12**.

Referring now to FIGS. **9***a* through **9***d* another alternative embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In these embodiments the container **12** may, again be of any functional shape desired and the fitment **10** is designed to functionally engage the shape of the container **12**. The fitment **10** includes a channel **26**. The channel **26** is designed to conform to the shape of edge **18** and extends along and engages a predetermined portion of the edge **18** of the container **12**. Alternatively, the fitment **10** may be integral to the edge **18** of the container **12**. Brackets **37** are provided to engage a predetermined side **13** of the container **12** and provide support for the supporting web **36**, which is coupled to channel **26** at hinge **22**. The brackets **37** further include lockable collapsible lever arms **39**, which extend from supporting web **36** to bracket arm **33** of the bracket **37**. The supporting web **36** may be easily removed from the container **12** by simply disengaging the channel **26** from the edge **18** of the container **12**. The supporting web **36** is coupled to the brackets **37** and may be swung up from the down position disclosed in FIGS. **9***a* and **9***c* to the up position disclosed in FIGS. **9***b* and **9***d* on hinge **22**. Lever arms **39** may be locked in place when the supporting web **36** is in the up position and a load may be placed on the supporting web **36**.

Referring now to FIGS. **10***a* through **10***d* another alternative embodiment of the present invention is disclosed. In these embodiments the container **12** may, again be of any functional shape desired and the fitment **10** is designed to functionally engage the shape of the container **12**. The fitment **10** includes a channel **26**. The channel **26** is designed to conform to the shape of edge **18** and extends along and engages the edge **18** of the container **12**. Alternatively, the fitment **10** may be integral to the edge **18** of the container **12**. In this embodiment the fitment **10** is hingedly coupled to the supporting web **36** at hinge **22**. The supporting web **36** includes a stop **15**. The fitment **10** includes an abutment **17**. Supporting web **36** may be rotated on hinge **22** so that stop **15** engages abutment **17**. This mechanical action presents aperture **32** and put supporting web **36** in position for a load to be placed upon it. After the load, e.g., a bag (seen in phantom as reference numeral **34**) containing material such as salt, sand, etc. has been emptied into the container **12** the supporting web **36** may be rotated back on hinge **22** so that aperture **32** is covered.

Referring now to FIGS. **11***a* through **11***d* another alternative embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In these embodiments the container **12** may, again be of any functional shape desired and the fitment **10** is designed to functionally engage the shape of the container **12**. The fitment **10** includes a channel **26**. The channel **26** is designed to conform to the shape of edge **18** and extends along and engages the edge **18** of the container **12**. Alternatively, the fitment **10** may be integral to the edge **18** of the container **12**. Fitment **10** is provided with a slot **25**. Supporting web **36** is rotatably coupled to the fitment **10** at hinge pin **19**. Slot **25** is of sufficient size to allow the supporting web **36** to be rotated on hinge pin **19** and extended out of slot **25** and retracted back through slot **25**. When supporting web **36** is extended through slot **25** aperture **32** is presented. When supporting web **36** is retracted through slot **25** so that its edge **35** abuts inner wall **11** of the fitment **10** aperture **32** is closed and the container **12** is covered. The supporting web **36** may further include an opening **21** that may be grasped by the user to aid in extending the supporting web **36** through the slot **25**. Once the supporting web **36** is rotated into the open position so that aperture **32** is presented, supporting web **36** in position for a load to be placed upon it. After the load of material **34** (seen in phantom as e.g., a bag containing material such as salt, sand, etc.), has been emptied into the container **12** the supporting web **36** may be rotated back on hinge pin **19** through slot **25** so that aperture **32** is covered.

Referring now to FIGS. **12***a* through **12***d* another alternative embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In these embodiments the container **12** may, again be of any func-

tional shape desired and the fitment **10** is designed to functionally engage the shape of the container **12**. The fitment **10** includes a channel **26** having curbs **28***a* and **28***b*. The channel **26** is located on fitment surface **41** and is designed to conform to and be engagable with the shape or contour of a predetermined portion of edge **18**. Preferably, but not necessarily, curbs **28***a* and **28***b* have predetermined pitch, which imparts an angle to channel **26**. Accordingly, the fitment **10** may be removed from covering the container **12** and channel **26** may be engaged with edge **18** so that fitment bottom surface **43** and aperture **32** are presented. Because the pitch of curbs **28***a* and **28***b* imparted a pitch to channel **26** supporting web **36** is tilted at a downward angle to aperture **32**. Consequently, supporting web **36** presents a ramp **40**, which aids in the transference of a load placed upon supporting web **36** from supporting web **36** into the container **12** through aperture **32**.

Referring now to FIGS. **13***a* through **13***b* another alternative embodiment of the invention is illustrated. In these embodiments the container **12** may, again be of any functional shape desired and the fitment **10** is designed to functionally engage the shape of the container **12**. The fitment **10** has an inside rim surface **44**. The container **12** has an inside surface **45**. A lockable collapsible bracket **31** is coupled to the inside rim surface **44** of the fitment **10** at hinge pin **29** and to the container **12** at bearing pin **46**. Bearing pin **46** is slidably engaged to bracket **31** in slot **47**. Fitment **10** is pivotally coupled to bracket **31** at hinge pin **29**. Fitment **10** may be lifted off of edge **18** of container **12** until pin **46** engages distal end **48** of the slot **47**. Fitment **10** may then be pivoted on hinge pin **29** so that aperture **32** is exposed and supporting web **36** engages a portion of edge **18** of the container at an angle sufficient to act as a ramp **40**, which aids in the transference of a load placed upon supporting web **36** from supporting web **36** into the container **12** through aperture **32**.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Furthermore, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described. While the preferred embodiment has been described, the details may be changed without departing from the invention, which is defined by the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container, said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an open end including an edge structure;

providing a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout, said peripheral portion engagable with said edge structure;

hingedly attaching an apertured cover to said planar surface member, said apertured cover arranged to rest upon said surface member;

providing a ramped surface extending laterally outwardly from said planar surface member;

rotating said hingedly attached cover to an opened position relative to said opening;

supporting said rotated opened cover on said ramped surface;

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the opened cover and said apertured planar surface; and

transferring said material into said first container.

2. The method of claim **1** wherein said material is salt.

3. The method of claim **1** wherein said material is a liquid.

4. The material of claim **1** wherein said material is sand.

5. The method of claim **1** wherein said material comprises articles to be sorted.

6. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an open end including an edge structure;

integrally forming a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout with said edge;

providing said apertured planar surface with an apertured cover having a rotatable hinge;

providing a ramped surface extending laterally outwardly from said planar surface member;

rotating said hinged cover to an opened position relative to said opening;

supporting said rotated opened cover on said ramped surface;

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the opened cover and transferring said material into said first container.

7. The method of claim **6** wherein said material is salt.

8. The method of claim **6** wherein said material is a liquid.

9. The material of claim **6** wherein said material is sand.

10. The method of claim **6** wherein said material comprises articles to be sorted.

11. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container, said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an open end including an edge structure;

providing a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout, said peripheral portion engagable with said edge structure;

hingedly attaching a cover to said planar surface member, said cover arranged to rest upon said surface member;

providing a ramped surface extending laterally outwardly from said planar surface member;

rotating said hingedly attached cover to an opened position relative to said opening;

supporting said rotated opened cover on said ramped surface;

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the opened cover and said apertured planar surface; and

transferring said material into said first container.

12. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an open end including an edge structure;

integrally forming a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout with said edge;

providing said apertured planar surface with a cover having a rotatable hinge;

providing a ramped surface extending laterally outwardly from said planar surface member;

rotating said hinged cover to an opened position relative to said opening;

supporting said rotated opened cover on said ramped surface; and

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the opened cover and transferring said material into said first container.

13. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an exterior and an open end, said open end including an edge structure;

integrally forming a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout with said edge;

providing said apertured planar surface with a cover;

moving said cover to an opened position relative to said opening;

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the opened cover and transferring said material into said first container; and

providing said peripheral portion with a slot having an opening, said cover capable of being extended and retracted through said slot; whereby when said cover is extended through said slot said opening is presented.

14. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an open end including an edge structure;

providing a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout, said peripheral portion engagable with said edge structure;

providing means for securing said peripheral portion to said edge;

providing said apertured planar surface with a cover;

moving said cover to an opened position relative to said opening;

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the opened cover and transferring said material into said first container; and

providing said peripheral portion with a slot having an opening, said cover capable of being extended and retracted through said slot; whereby when said cover is extended through said slot said opening is presented.

15. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an exterior and an open end, said open end including an edge structure;

integrally forming a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout with said edge;

providing at least one bracket structure having at least a first end removably engagable to an exterior surface of said first container and at least a second end coupled to said peripheral portion; providing said at least one bracket with at least one lockable collapsible lever mechanism; and

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the peripheral portion and transferring said material into said first container.

16. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing the first container with an exterior and an open end, said open end including an edge structure;

providing a supporting apertured planar surface member having a peripheral portion formed thereabout; said peripheral portion engagable with said edge structure;

providing at least one bracket structure having at least a first end removably engagable to an exterior surface of the said container and at least a second end coupled to said peripheral portion;

providing said bracket with at least one lockable collapsible lever mechanism; and

lifting said second container and the material contained therein from the said different level to rest upon the peripheral portion and transferring said material into said first container.

17. The method of claim **16** further including the step of providing means for securing said peripheral portion to said edge.

18. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing said first container with a fitment comprising a supporting web, a slot, a hinge mechanism and a channel

providing said first container with at least one open end including at least one edge structure;

engaging said channel with said edge structure;

rotatably coupling said supporting web to said fitment at said hinge structure;

providing said fitment with a slot, said slot having sufficient size and spatial orientation so that said supporting web may be rotated on said hinge mechanism and extended out of said slot and retracted back through said slot;

extending said supporting web through said slot to thereby present said opening;

placing said material and its second container on said supporting web; and

transferring said material into said first container.

19. A method of transferring a material into a first container from a second container, and wherein the material and its second container is lifted from a different level to the opening level of said first container; said method comprising the steps of:

providing said first container with at least one open end including at least one edge structure;

providing said first container with a fitment, said fitment including a supporting web surface and a channel;

providing said channel with a plurality of curb structures having a predetermined pitch and spatially orientated to impart a predetermined angle to said channel;

locating said channel on a first fitment surface substantially opposite said supporting web surface;

presenting at least a portion of said open end by engaging said channel with at least one portion of said edge structure;

placing said material and its second container on said supporting web; and

transferring said material into said first container.

* * * * *